

TOWN PLANNING DOCTRINE IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT: Today the city is reduced to the role of money-generating factory, rather than being the manifestation of collective memory, hence the introduction of the concept of chaos as a means of generating urban space, while "research by design" methods are also invoked. To prevent such a situation from continuing, contemporary urban planners strive for a doctrine of harmonious urban development that would be worded as follows: activity bringing change to urban space shall not be of such an intensity as to go beyond the level determined for it through the statutory planning and urban design process, and as expressing harmonious linkage between the built and natural environments, as well as between both of these and the economic and social needs of city-dwellers.

KEY WORDS: town planning doctrine, the liberal economy, harmonious development

1 BACKGROUND – POWER AND MONEY

1.1 Many years ago a view took shape that, if things were to go better and better with the economy, it was necessary to permit full freedom of action, and to give free reign to the enthusiasm of the entrepreneur and the unfettered competition of the free market. The liberal economic doctrine that can be characterised so concisely in this way was and remains against any kind of intervention on or with the market, which is deemed to be present with fully-formed laws wherever there is a good for which there is demand capable of being supplied with a view to that demand being fully or partly satisfied. In connection with this, everything became (i.e. was dubbed and was taken to be) a good, irrespective of whether there was a lot or a little of it around, or whether or not it was distributed continuously. As a result, all moderation in the utilisation of goods was lost, the justification sufficient for the purposes of the liberal economy being that increasing demand for certain goods warranted ever greater supply.

However, in the mid 20th century it was noted that the above means of operating would lead to the exhaustion of the so-called non-renewable goods, this realisation signalling the birth of the doctrine of sustainable development. The latter was best encapsulated in the tenet that we should satisfy the needs of present generations without putting at risk future generations' possibilities of meeting their own needs. Formulations that were at best minor variations on this theme made a great career for themselves, appearing in many documents and laws around the world, not least the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of Poland.

This is all fine, the only problem being the way in which few realise that the good capable of being exhausted most rapidly, and perhaps irrevocably, is space. And this is a good over which virtually no care at all is taken, as many examples make clear.

1.2 The financial crisis afflicting the USA in 2008 did not come out of thin air. Rather, the financial institutions offering mortgages played down fears that had been appearing for several years by then regarding a stalling of the real-estate market. The banks were meanwhile busy conferring highest-risk (*subprime*) loans on pretty much anyone who wanted one, even where those involved were clearly not creditworthy. The loans were most often based around the adjustable mortgage system, which – it might be added – is also now in use in Poland. In this description we still lack one element, which is to say an analysis as to who elected to build on the understanding that property prices would be set high, and why would they do that? Who stood to gain from it? And how did it happen that activity under the heading of "pursuing the American dream" provided for the construction of urban settlements whose current fate is to be relegated to the "ghost town" category?

In essence, Americans know everything because they are able to describe it. And it is worth recalling their description of the elimination of barriers to investment and development, noting at the same time how – just as in Poland – nobody responsible for the state of towns and cities took any notice of these texts, assuming they bothered to acquaint themselves with them at all.

1.3 We must note at the outset how the liberal economy (or the version thereof introduced in Poland from 1989) is wont to regard planning as a "tool of oppression", this view leaving the private ownership of land as something entirely inviolable. There is furthermore a rejection of the kind of integrated regional planning that might otherwise inject some economic and environmental coordination at least, into cities spilling out beyond the limits of the imagination. Likewise eschewed is the concept of the public interest, since this inevitably denotes the market's regulation by those in authority, the Polish mentality being to regard any kind of regulation or interference in this area as something of communist origin to be treated with the utmost suspicion. This was indeed the first barrier on the road to the liberal economy to be obliterated.

Continuing with this argumentation, we note how Poland (though not only Poland) has borne witness to a process that questions the need for urban design, most especially where that might lead to the creation of public space. Beyond that, the provisioning of services – including in education and health – has been consigned to the private entrepreneur. The result has been a dividing-up of land into plots solely for residential purposes (without a trace of any other function that would fail to turn a profit). Plots are of similar size, and so are bought by people of similar status, in this way giving rise to modern-day ghettos housing groups of identical wealth status, educational attainments, habits, etc.

Beyond even these things, Poland has had enacted for it (under the slogan of "flexibility") – plans under which anyone who wanted to has in essence been able to put whatever they wanted wherever they wanted to (just look at the 1992 Warsaw Plan). The only condition has been that there be official confirmation of land ownership (though the new draft Act sees even this certification replaced by a declaration on the part of the potential investor).

Then there is the way in which financial mechanisms have been dreamed up to allow accelerated inflows of funding into those ways of building on given sites that entail the simplest forms and briefest durations. As a result, the supervision of investments and locations has passed over from city authorities into the hands of banks and developers.

Likewise, the building of motorways (something we Poles long for) has already managed to open up new opportunities as regards locations ever further from cities, this facilitating the purchase of cheaper land.

Conclusion: urban sprawl and the emergence of ever-more megalopolises are the consequences of the Liberal (maybe rather the Neo-Liberal) doctrine's dominance in the economy, the slogan "a better dwelling in a green habitat" being employed in the achievement of a true goal which is the maximisation of profits for individuals and organisations connected with the building of the said "better dwellings".

1.4 The result of the sprawling of cities has been the outflow of population and money from what were hitherto central areas. In many cases this has denoted a prolongation of cities' agony, if only in the physical sense, since in the figurative sense that agony has already ended, the traditional city having died in the meantime. What we are now dealing with is a new city of the kind that the word *megalopolis* was dreamed up to describe, a long time ago now. One of the features of this is incessant enlargement of the built-up area, something we regard in professional terms as the emergence of overlapping amorphous urbanised zones in reflection of the proximity of cities. Such zones are assemblages of single-family housing put up rapidly and *ad hoc*, without streets, squares, direction or axes; without homage being paid to either typical rural or urban features, and hence with an unavoidable failure to move the imagination, to shape theories of place or to motivate urban planning or architectural design. This leaves them as beautiful places in which to research the cases that films like *American Beauty* or *Born to Kill* portrayed so effectively.

Conclusion: many designs are put into effect without attention being paid to what already exists in a city. And nor is this a post-modernist game for multiplicity and density, but rather a construction of an "alternate reality" (to the existing one), whereby the remnants of the old city go on doing their thing as they may, while we do ours. In the context of the Liberal doctrine, the city is thus little more than a factory designed to make money. For that to be so, there can be no place for the city as a depiction of collective memory, and – thus reduced to the status of mere palimpsest – the city is consciously deprived of that layer of modernity which harks back to the past. This is why the chaos concept is employed as a way of creating

urban space, and this is what is served by the injection into urban planning (especially where urban composition is referred to) of the "research by design" method that can be re-encapsulated using the military terminology of "battle reconnaissance".

1.5 What is to be done in the kind of situation described above? Well it is obviously possible to write about checks on further increases in city size, of new relationships between urban and rural areas, of the creation of a polycentric settlement system and of proper management of the urban ecosystem, an appropriate locations policy and the devising of design strategies in urban planning. Unfortunately, however, none of this argumentation cuts much ice with adherents of the Liberal economic doctrine. And, since the rate of turnover of capital is now so critical, investors are not even "reached" by the claim that, by means of the so-called "economy of amenities", we may obtain a good longer-term return on any outlays if we work to increase the charm of cityspace.

So, to put it in a nutshell, we have to brace ourselves to live in the new, sprawling city. And if that is not what we want, we can only fall back on the cold comfort that pundits sometimes offer, which is that Neo-Liberalism is about to be consigned to the lumber-room of history. Those experts mostly add that the US financial crisis has arisen out of blind adherence to capitalism going unchecked by the state or independent institutions. Thus did a blossoming property market, absence of barriers to investment, mass movement from the Snow Belt to the Sun Belt and implemented highway-building programmes – as all underpinned by common or garden greed – prove collectively capable of doing to death the traditional city.

1.6 (Neo-)Liberalism defends itself. We are told that the loss of the above system would mean victory for the populist-fundamentalists. However, it is also worth asking whether Liberalism in today's Polish (Eastern European) version makes sense, when we are questioning the role of the economy in urban space.

At the outset we would wish to know if the authorities – at state level in particular – have some objective for cities as they defend Liberal principles in the economy. Urban planning, understood as the science and art of building cities, has sought to prompt them with a goal, but there is little sign that the state has taken note and is working towards some final formulation. Indeed, it would seem that the state does not even want to document and list conflicts arising, since this in itself might (unconsciously) offer preliminary input for the drawing up of new rules. In this situation it comes as no surprise that nature has abhorred the vacuum, encouraging the most active and powerful players on the urban scene – i.e. the developers and the banks – to dive in.

Poland's authorities have failed to grasp that the EU's call for cities to compete has gone hand in hand with a call for them to work together; just as they have failed to take proper heed of new demographic challenges. Paradoxically, it seems that the trend towards rampant consumerism in society is actually handy for those in power, because a society run along these lines only needs to be supplied with stereotypical communiqués worded pretty much like Valentine cards. The arduous task of coming up with ambitious projects that might really raise quality of life in the longer term may then safely be dispensed with. For any taking of the long view of things denotes the risk that a life in politics based on ease and playing it safe might have to give way to genuine governance, as opposed to mere day-to-day management. Genuine governance would be that kind in which the will of those in power actually became (had to become) reality, with that reality not being dependent on the behaviour of those third parties whose role should be confined to the provision of services.

In case my meaning is not yet crystal clear, let us note how the aforesaid bankers and developers fall within the aforementioned group, since their influence on the stability of contacts between the governing and the governed turns out to be of key significance. So key in fact that – somewhere down the line – the national policy that ought to be in the purview of the administration has seen itself privatised, in what must be viewed as a real triumph for Liberalism, in Poland at least.

1.7 Today's authorities in Poland are seeking to achieve a kind of Post-Modernist "softness", pretending to fail to notice that this is being taken advantage of by the supposedly-governed, who are becoming tougher and tougher. Here it is not so much a question of order being imposed as regards interests, as it is in essence of a world that excludes values and interests finally being imbued with a system of norms, a law, thanks to which different values and conflicting interests might exist side by side.

For this to happen there would need to be focus and concentration. Instead of that, November 2008 saw the Polish authorities – de facto from a single political camp in the hands of a single political party – draw up three competing draft Spatial Planning Acts! If we accept that the Act's main task is to prevent spread (of cities), the above depiction would be quite funny – were it not for the fact that what we are all concerned with is space – a unique asset and one that is being destroyed ever more rapidly.

This means that the discourse surrounding the use of space is bound up in a game which the authorities naively present as today's reality, thereby disguising its true nature. And it is visible from the latest happenings that the authorities are not reliable partners characterised by constancy of viewpoint, and are failing to make the intellectual effort required to stand up to the "spontaneously-arising order". Yet without such an effort there will merely be a multiplication of the old order and no capacity whatever to keep control over change.

In the light of all this, it can come as no surprise that the urban planner, whose task is to plan for and implement changes in space in line with the public interest, is treated by participants in the above game as an opponent to be fought with. And when we demand that there be a cleanup of thinking about space we are treated to lectures about a "mafia" of planners...

2 BACKGROUND – NEW PHENOMENA.

2.1 New urban geography has its origins in the emergence of electronic communications networks and large multinational (supranational) corporations, as well as in the fact that cities are not needed to produce today's most fundamental good of all, which is information. On the other hand, no firm on Earth can be reduced to mere electronic impulses. There will always be a physical dimension, and that "phsycality" has to be based somewhere. Furthermore, in spite of everything, it cannot be said that a firm's seat is a matter of no importance. Rather, the search is usually on for locations placing high on all those many and varied rankings. As it happens, there is a rather short list of such most-attractive cities, only several tens in total.

Equally, the process by which an urban area sucks in potential and assumes "capital" status is present on every spatial scale, and among the many consequences of this phenomenon is the way in which office districts always arise – not necessarily in true centres – these being run by wealthy employees who almost inevitably succumb to the temptations put out by crafty developers to go and live in single-family homes beyond the city limits. The model for this, originating across the ocean, is now well-entrenched in Europe as a whole, and is likewise to be observed in Poland.

2.2 New citizens – the existence of a multiethnic society is a fact of life in many countries, and that now goes for Poland too. Today we regard openness to other cultures as a decisive factor in our achievement of competitiveness in the market. Rich countries in which the greater part of the population is ageing and the natural increase limited must count on young, dynamic incomers from abroad if they are to maintain standards of living. And if new talent is not forthcoming, the innovative capabilities of a country are stifled.

2.3 Neo-Liberalism was discussed in the previous section, but it is also worth recalling the globalisation issue. Opponents of that say that among its effects is a certain impotence on the part of public authorities, and hence a distancing of power from politics. This claim reflects the fact that power is becoming global and extra-territorial, while politics remains – or becomes – local and territorial. This all widens the gap between, on the one hand, space (in which matters of real importance to the population are to be resolved) and, on the other, institutional opportunities for supervision and control, as would be expected from the sovereign state.

It needs to be recalled that virtually any owner of capital can become a supplier thereof, since there is effectively now a right for a person to locate capital anywhere in the world that he/she wants – wherever the profit is greatest. The scramble for profits means that the sums transferred around are huge, capable of undermining and disenfranchising governments, and hence inclined to enforce respect for Neo-Liberal principles. These principles are straightforward: the budget is to be small (interventionism, let alone statism, being eschewed and minimised), the regulation of demand is to be desisted from (except inasmuch as the money supply is to be protected), privatisation is to be engaged in, and political democracy treated with a lack of enthusiasm. This all notwithstanding the fact that some at least see this whole way of doing things as nothing more or less than unprincipled pragmatism.

But the future of such pragmatism looks far from rosy when its actual performance is assessed. This is especially because of the uncertainty that the aforementioned principles underpinning its dominance do nothing to dispel. Among these is the way in which there is so little room left for planning, including spatial planning. In exchange for that we have life as a chain of short-duration events. In urban planning terms this denotes such a shaping of reality as is prepared to accept that the world and culture are impermanent, and that we may play down to the point of non-existence all that is not in flux and transient, since only items of the latter characteristics can be up and ready for immediate use. In the life run in this way the goalposts keep on moving, there is no time for a better tomorrow because a different today is forever being demanded. Limits to possibilities are lacking in such a life. And without them there may be nothing but emptiness beyond the next design.

But does globalisation only denote threat and danger? Perhaps not, since we talk of the World's New Youth as we refer to it. The prospect of globalisation really might make it possible for people and societies currently not in world civilisation's main stream to be brought within it...

It is almost sure that the society of the future will be based around knowledge as the main factor of production. That society in which knowledge will be of such fundamental importance may in fact ask itself the fundamental questions more often than does its present-day counterpart. This will reflect the way in which a superabundance of goods will nurture an ever-greater sense of doubt about the worth of the materialistic pursuit of objects. Getting used to asking such questions, and to saying no, are things that only an appropriate education can supply. To put it another way, there must arise some positive vision as to how to make the world a better place. Without it, all who suffer from the injustice associated with globalisation will turn away from any developmental trends whatever.

2.4 New local-government philosophies. The management concept responding to the challenges now facing city authorities is "governance", whose general definition holds that this is a democratically organised system of management via which inhabitants act collectively on the local scale to increase wellbeing, satisfy common needs and secure social justice.

2.5 New participation. Thanks to the ritualisation of procedures present hitherto (as a result of the institutionalising of contacts between the authorities and citizens), governance at the local level has started to eschew the intellectual omnipotence of the state in favour of knowledge of cities' actual needs. For this reason the role of the planner is also changing: instead of appearing with a ready-made solution prepared at the behest of "the centre", he or she is to fashion into a sensible whole all that reaches him/her "bottom up", from the grassroots.

Today, public participation denotes the local community's responsibility for decisions taken on the basis of democratic mechanisms. This offers a strengthening of democracy, the feeling of citizenship and civic pride, and the sense of affinity with the given place, in this way easing social divisions and disparities. The price for this is the utilisation and management of space "by a committee", i.e. through the obtainment of compromise solutions that are not necessarily able to offer forms of the highest quality. In an ideal world, we should therefore be working towards some happy medium between top-down strategic planning and bottom-up participation, as plans are transformed into precise action taken. This all leads us to the realisation that, while participation is a necessary condition, for planning and urban design it is not of itself a sufficient condition.

2.7 Forbearance – in short: a/ in many cities it has not so far proved possible to overcome the division into "old" and "new" areas, b/ there has been no change in the spatial segregation experienced by the ageing population, c/ cities are actually being characterised by increasing socio-spatial disparities, d/ it is possible to note a failure of the educational system to adjust to the growing need for a better-prepared workforce, e/ an end has been put to conflict-resolution in cities with the aid of housing policy.

3 BACKGROUND - EXPECTATIONS

3.1 Planning is undoubtedly a form of creation, in that it is directly associated with the emergence of a built-up environment. But when we stated that a city was not merely a form, we discarded the life of the

designer-creator, instead becoming participants in planning procedure. But we remember that, in spite of everything, a plan arising as a result of the above procedures should also be a three-dimensional spatial design, at least if we want to ensure its harmonious development. It should also be a provision underpinning the activity to make a three-dimensional design a reality, at least if we want to ensure the reality in space of what had been intended. Such a plan is not going to make assumptions as regards an area's development beyond its capabilities.

A city rising up in line with a plan of the above kind will continue to represent a depiction of what we would dub the European City. Consideration thus has to be given to the strategies that would, by promoting the aforementioned urban design, assist the survival of a city of this kind. The strategies in question should assist in the search for answers as to how new central points might be made use of and how the points of this kind already in existence might be protected, as well as how the existing urban structure might be consolidated and have other new structures linked up with it. Consideration should also be given to the role to be played by urban, suburban and extra-urban open spaces, as well as to how – and to what extent – these should be safeguarded against building, as well as to the way in which to shape the edge of and boundaries between built-up areas, and to stimulate positive phenomena – even if only by way of the configurations conferred upon infrastructural networks.

3.2 Managing a city's development – how should this look in the future? It may be necessary for an evolution in the current planning system of city authorities to take place, this involving the breakdown of the branch system of services in favour of task teams, transboundary teams, areal teams, etc. This is actually a separate issue, and perhaps one to be addressed within the framework of an urban development strategy.

3.3 Analyses of areas with highly valuable natural features – these are of such importance today on account of the universal extension (or “sprawl”) of urban construction into suburban areas. This in turn reflects the lack of any delineated boundaries beyond which new building may simply not take place – these ideally being determined following an analysis of the needs of a city as such when it comes to development (rather than the needs of particular developers themselves), as well as the possibilities for the plans determined to be put into effect. The aim would be for each new development to seamlessly become part of the city scene, or at least to augment it in some valuable way. It needs to be anticipated that the uncrossable building line is to link up with the areal boundaries of the city, in a belt of land in which it will be possible to make changes better aligning the means and manner of construction pursued on both sides of that limit.

Today we are ever-more inclined to refer to the city-region or the city within the region, this in some way favouring the automatic inclusion within a city of the once-open areas beyond it. Processes leading to the appearance of such cities are intensifying rather than weakening. Hence, what we call “suburban areas” today may well find themselves part of the city itself in the future. In the second place, what we today dub urban sprawl with all the attendant negative connotations will continue to exist, albeit without the downside on account of the fact that the phenomenon will have become so widespread. Everything thus comes down to whether the expansion referred to will continue to be spontaneous or will prove controllable.

This is why we should focus, not on changes in reality, but on the revealing of the new opportunities that ongoing processes can offer. One direction to action should involve the founding of new “urban landscapes” in the space between what have thus far been urban centres, space that has hitherto been termed open or empty or negative. In this way, space empty up to now is raised to the same rank as that enjoyed by built-up areas. Perhaps it is for this reason that the contrast between the full and the empty has been disappearing, but it is better that this should happen than that the constant ease with which open space can be utilised should turn against the morphology of both. These theoretical considerations, which are in fact justified, obviously arise in conditions of development pressure for green space to be built on, the lack of a clear policy on the future of farmland, the lack of any more precise determination of expectations regarding naturalists' roles in determining the status, suitability and future of urban green space, and (in Poland especially) the lack of coordination between the often-fragmented management of the space in question. Only by way of such coordination can a harmonious urban space take shape.

3.4 Harmonious urban space, or more specifically the emergence thereof, requires the establishment of a sequence of actions in line with the logic that a spatially-desirable result be arrived at.

Thus, at the outset of the design process there should be a defining of the IDEA, which will then be the basis for the devising of strategic and operational objectives. To put it another way, if there is no substantively devised view of what kind of city we would like to have – and why – then there is no chance of it developing rationally, to say nothing of sustainably.

It is from the IDEA that a CONCEPT is to arise. Only on the basis of clear spatial concepts is it possible to draw up a PLAN that sanctions the concept in legal terms.

It results from all this that we ought to work on the basis of an adopted set of instructions that are clear and comprehensible, and at the same time synthetic and precisely-defined. These days, the overall objective of the process of spatial planning (i.e. the logical distributing of functions and objects across space in such a way that this action simultaneously gives rise to spatial harmony) is rarely defined precisely and/or well enough, ensuring that it comes under fire from those who do not appreciate the sense it makes. The criticism referred to usually leads to a recognition that plan provisions constitute the unjustified whim of the author(s) thereof. There is a negation of the wisdom of taking on any “rigid provisions” in the name of a recognition that spontaneity and variability are very interesting, while planning stands in the way of investment.

A further conclusion concerns the need to indicate the clear link between an IDEA taken on board at an earlier stage and the detailed spatial decisions that later arise out of it. It will therefore be necessary to stress features imbuing the structure of a city with a sense of spatial harmony, these including:

- the clarity with which the character of different complexes is manifested,
- the legibility of both boundaries and nodes,
- a scale (size) of spatial units limited to that which can be envisaged and imagined by the community/society inhabiting and/or making use of them,
- the local specifics (identity) of the urban fabric arising by means of a synthesis of elements of the geographical, natural and cultural environments.

3.5 Summary: if harmonious urban space is to be generated, the conditions to be fulfilled include:

- the establishment and/or strengthening of full autonomy within morphologically homogeneous units, these having boundaries set in a manner acceptable to the communities inhabiting them, by way of the implementation of a polycentric urban configuration,
- work in harmony with nature, i.e. by reconciling urban development with the preservation of the environment and/or the reinstatement of its valuable features, with simultaneous economical use of energy; this in other words requiring that a city’s development be subordinated to sustainable development principles when it comes to categories economic (with attractive conditions for the investment of capital be it large-, medium or small-scale), social (with complexes of construction on a human scale, demonstrating multifunctionality, characterised by diverse standards and living conditions, adjusted to a variety of preferences and pockets, with places of work and services readily accessible on foot or by public transport), natural (with protection of green space, limitation of pollutant emissions to the air and water) and spatial (with every effort made to achieve legibility of urban structure and spatial order on the local scale),
- such a use of existing resources (urban assets) as will assure all inhabitants of equal opportunities in everything that concerns their lives, with their involvement and consent (in line with the principle that “controlled consideration” be given to market mechanisms). What is involved here is the heeding of:
 - the principle that conditions be put in place for the concentration of investment in activity in parts of a city selected by reference to public interest and private interest criteria (attractiveness to investors and the achievement of desirable effects in the landscape and as regards the way a city functions), as well as the principle that “a whole” be created, in contrast to diffuse development and the burdens arising from constant building and rebuilding work in all parts of a city,
 - the principle that green space be protected from being built up, at least until available inner-city areas have been put to use in development, i.e. the principle that the needs of development be met first and foremost through augmentation of existing urban fabric,
 - the principle that public transport be assigned priority, while traffic involving private cars is limited, with this extending to the locating of opportunities for employment within “dormitory” housing estates.

3.6 New Planning. The existence of the aforesaid expectations leading to the creation and coalescing of the (new?) society for a new city confirms the need for New Planning. Let us recall that this term is taken to mean those changes in urban planning that seek the diversification of space in line with rising demand therefor. The term arose to give a name to those elements of urban planning and design that require renewal and are renewed. New Planning is to be the planners' response to the ever-more rapid changes ongoing in the world around us, and is linked with the fact that we often lose control over events.

We may say that the cities enjoying a better chance of achieving desirable change are those that link a facing up to the future from the economic point of view with a safeguarding of valuable spatial features. The towns and cities in question are those:

- that differ markedly from others in spatial terms,
- in which institutions private and public adjust to changing operating conditions across space,
- in which investors/developers understand that concern for spatial harmony represents a long-term "insurance policy" through which to ensure success,
- in which care for how things look is a part of the development of "local patriotism",
- in which public-private partnerships operate to increase the outlays available to transform a city.

4 THE DOCTRINE

4.1 The inspiration for the devising of the Doctrine is the sum total of professional experience gained, but *de facto* it draws most on the draft Spatial Planning Acts appearing in Poland in the years 2007–2009, which seek to eliminate public control over spatial processes. At first glance it would seem that the Act's authors do not have a clue about urbanisation processes. However, it soon becomes apparent that this is not the *faux pas* of the ignorant, but rather a well thought-out and cynical move on the part of politicians ready to destroy Polish space in order to boost the profits of a small group of people making money by putting up homes no matter where. This is the time of plague and pandemic it has fallen to our lot to live and work through, and whose symptoms are all too visible to the naked eye outside every window. The question arising out of all this is whether the 20th century taught us nothing at all when it comes to building cities?

4.2 Well, the 20th century did teach us that the development of cities was to be "sustainable", but it also required us to refer to "eco-development". This term might have been better replaced by "harmonious development", since this tells us more about the preservation of equilibrium through a sustainable approach to the reconciliation of interests of both the natural and built environments. Harmony denotes planning in advance of events, sensitive to ensuring that inhabitants are not exposed to worsening living conditions as these are of course assessed over the longer term. In this way, the goal of policies drawn up for cities does not have to be the race to build optimal structures and forms (i.e. what was fought for in the 20th century), but rather constant control over the main urban systems.

The 20th century further taught us that a city should at one and the same time be:

- green and healthy (though we know that a friendly environment is not the only guarantor of sustainability of life in a city and does not of itself assure rational efficiency of urban systems and structures);
- beautiful (albeit with even the best-composed image of a city saying nothing about the processes ongoing within it);
- free of conflict (while conflicts will always be present, it is important that they be resolved effectively, especially where there are clear juxtapositions of wealth and poverty, cheapness and expensiveness, far and near, skilfulness v. nonsensicality, etc.).

The lessons of the 20th century are that a city's form (we are not talking here about its appearance *per se*) depends on:

- its physical dimensions (the distance travelled within it comes into play here, and by that token energy expenditure);
- the density of construction (energy again being implicated, since the greater the density, the more energy-saving),
- the type of public transport and routes along which it is run;
- the shape of urban space, be this compact (as contrasting with extra-urban open space), and in a large centre polycentric (as opposed to characterised by a single, excessively large centre).

If we pay due heed to the above lessons, then our city will be characterised by such widely-desired features as:

- a diversification of function within its different complexes, such that as many urban journeys and activities as possible be conducted over short distances;
- good communications between complexes and with the city-centre area;
- a means of organising central spaces that attracts investors with ease of location and unique composition of space not to be enjoyed in quite the same way anywhere else;
- compactness – i.e. with a real setting of the boundaries of a given complex as distinct from others, e.g. green space.

4.3 It results from these considerations that urban planning is today in need of a **doctrine for the harmonious development of cities** which is worded as follows: **Activity bringing change to urban space shall not be of such an intensity as to go beyond the level determined for it through the statutory planning and urban design process, and as expressing harmonious linkage between the built and natural environments, as well as between both of these and the economic and social needs of city-dwellers.**
