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POLISH EXPERIENCES AND PLANNING PHILOSOPHY FOR '80

The philosophy of urban planning is based on an assumption of a permanent growth process. The planners take it for granted that public as well as private sectors are interested in the development and have sufficient resources for investments. They understand the main role of planning as a control of capital resource allocation from social and environmental point of view. That philosophy of planning caused:

- a) concentration of attention on the control of building processes and location of new developments only,
- b) the developing of tools for urban policy implementation of restrictive character only, not creating any stimuli encouraging the urban growth.

The recession period proved that the growth may not be a permanent process. In the conditions of inhibited building processes the sense of locational planning becomes doubtful and the restrictive tools cease to be effective.

But it seems to me that the economic recession is not the only reason for a search for a new philosophy. The evaluation of urban policy effects can confirm a low effectiveness of planning systems in a majority of European countries; even in those of planned economies.

The new philosophy cannot be found by small amendments to current planning systems. An in-depth verification of basic assumptions and hypothesis is needed. For this reason I would like to introduce some essentials to make clear my approach and conclusions.

My national experience influences the content of this paper

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in a strong way. Poland is in a critical period and we are looking for the ways to get out of it. Therefore, the role of urban planning is under discussion, too. It seems to me, that some remarks on it may be of more general interest.

So this paper consists of:

- 1) an introduction on urban question in Poland and factors of Polish urban crisis;
- 2) some remarks on relation between urban quality and efficiency of national economy;
- 3) my concept of an urban system as subject to be planned;
- 4) a note on some approaches to the understanding of the term "plan";
- 5) comments on recent discussion on planning systems organization in Poland;
- 6) some conclusions which are not concluding but rather opening the problems.

1. The Urban Question in Poland

To make this paper understandable it seems necessary to present some generalities about the urban question in Poland and reasons of current crisis.

Post-war period of reconstruction and development of Polish towns yielded many serious successes, but at the same time numerous mistakes in urban policy are to be noted. It is not a task of this paper to make a complex evaluation. Therefore, I will only enumerate reasons of unsatisfactory state of our towns which should be eliminated from our economic system which is being presently reformed.

a) Sectorial Organization

The obvious consequence of nationalization of means of production and of introduction of central planning system was to base national economy on sectorial organization. Thus, sectorial management systems were created which were aiming mainly at the realization of their own sectorial tasks. There was a

tendency to increase the efficiency, mainly through the achievement of economics of scale and concentration of resources. However, the opportunities given by externalities were ignored as the sectors became rather closed systems oriented mainly on their internal organization. The cooperation among the firms took place mostly within the frame of sectorial organization. Institutional connections were stronger than neighbourhood connections.

b) Priority for Industry

National policy was concentrated on the increase of national income. Thus, priority was given to the production and everything was considered from the point of view of direct influence on its increase.

The policy of limitation of expenditures for non-productive sectors caused delay in urbanization process with all its negative consequences. Undevelopment of towns is for nearly ten years a brake to the economic development. The most drastic results of such a policy are visible in the field of housing, but they are quite serious in the field of utilities and facilities necessary for residential development.

As the effect of this policy limits were introduced to local budgets and to certain degree urban development was financed as concurrent projects to the industrial plants. The better part of services such as nurseries, kindergartens, clubs, cinemas and others were financed by industry, which made impossible any kind of sensible municipal policy in this field. Financing of the development of technical infrastructure through the means of newly located plants caused measurable losses because of lengthening of the development cycle, since the earlier equipment of land for the construction was impossible.

c) Limitations of Local Authorities Power

Political system evolution after 1944 was reflected in, among the others, cancelling of the autonomy of municipalities and successive limitation of the role of local authorities also in

the field of economy; thus, policy-making centers and social groups which could be interested in forming efficiently functioning territorial system, disappeared. The role of elected bodies was very limited. Functioning of territorial administration was evaluated by central government units only, from the point of view of implementation of their instructions. Dependence of local authorities on the means which are at departments' disposal made impossible any counteractions against the interest of industry, even in the case of obvious interference with social interest. Local authorities had been successively deprived of means and juridical tools to act. They were unable to perform any local policy of development.

System of financing the local budgets based on rather freely created allocations and limiting the proper use, according to the local needs, made more difficult and often impossible efficient use of these means, not creating any stimuli for savings and initiatives.

Simultaneously, centralization of planning and decision-making caused uniformity of criteria which were based on analyses in macro scale. Meanwhile, individual man estimates reality, mainly according to his own observations of surrounding reality. Thus, he feels especially strongly all the negative events taking place in the area where he lives, works and moves. All these events he estimates according to his own scale of values and needs.

Centralization causes that criteria of choice of policy-makers are to differ to a certain degree from real needs of local communities. In the effect, barne expenditures are not to cause the increase of social satisfaction to such an extent to which it could be possible if the policy and resources were decentralized. In the latter case for the same money much higher social satisfaction would be achieved.

d) Land and National Resources Management

Nationalization caused also taking over of the municipal assets by the state. Individual enterprises obtain land and right to exploit natural resources. However, our economic theory

and practice consider land and mineral resources as priceless. Land utilized by an enterprise is not part of the assets for which it is responsible. The value of mined minerals is reflecting only the costs borne during their exploitation.

As the result it led to extensive use of land and natural resources with all secondary negative results.

3. Urban Quality and Efficiency of National Economy

Does any relation exist between the quality of urban areas and efficiency of national economy? If so, urban planning is of a particular importance and responsibility in recession period, even a longer time is usually needed to amend the quality of an urban place. If not, planning cannot be any tool in the fight on the economic field. I think it is. Towns create environment in which people live and firms work. If towns as complex systems function badly, the efficiency of economic activities decreases. No firm or household can be isolated from bad influence of its social, economic or physical environment.

But the general feeling of this impact is not sufficient to undertake right action. The knowledge, however, in this field is very limited. During last period in Poland, within research programme on economic crisis, we have formulated some hypotheses only. The unbalanced economy makes it impossible to verify them by any empirical studies. Now the question, however, is of an essential importance in Polish conditions. Due to priority given to industrialization, urbanization became delayed and our towns underdeveloped. This delay had a bad impact on living conditions of urban population, on increasing number of commuters and on efficiency of work during the seventies already. But the economic crisis gave to this problem a new value.

The mentioned relation may be considered in three categories:

a) in consumption - one of town's tasks is to fulfill the needs of population. However, development and functioning of settlement system requires financial, material, energetic and

labour outlays. Towns consume resources of natural environment, time and energy of their inhabitants. Thus, the efficiency of settlement functioning influences the level of outlays borne by population and national economy. The more effective the functioning of a town is, the lower level of outlays is regarded to fulfill the social needs, so, the efficiency of national economy is better and more resources can be used for consumption.

b) in production - towns create environment in which firms carry out their activities. If a town functions badly it is of direct negative influence on the efficiency of its work. As it is known from the theory of systems, in a disorganized system individual elements cannot act with maximum efficiency as the part of their energy must be used to compensate negative external inputs.

Bad development and functioning of towns negatively influence activities of individual firms mostly through:

- inefficiency of urban infrastructure (water and energy supply, sewerage, road system, etc.),
- bad functioning of transport and communication,
- arduousness of life which lowers the labour efficiency of people (e.g. undevelopment of services, quality of environment etc.).

c) territorial organization of national economy - towns and regions create economic systems which, as a result of the processes of multiplier character, "produce" benefits for particular units which are elements of these systems. The phenomenon of externalities is widely discussed in the economic literature. However, a condition to achieve these benefits is to develop cooperation among firms within the frames of the particular territorial complexes. In this way, the efficiency can be increased through greater specialization, and the material stocks and transport costs can be lowered.

The sectorial organization of the Polish economy is the reason why local externalities were lost and in the result the opportunities to make the production costs lower were lost as well.

It seems that in all three spheres bad conditions of our towns have been influencing negatively the efficiency of economy.

3. Urban System as Subject to be Planned

The above mentioned Polish experiences leads us to verify some basic assumptions of our planning philosophy. But to do that it is necessary to establish some theoretical foundations.

A town, a metropolitan area or a region are very complex systems which consist of some subsystems of different character. They form the frameworks of human life and activities. But an urban system is not only of physical character. It is to be stressed that another non-physical sphere exists (called also a sphere of information) where a huge part of growth and operational processes occur. Y. Barrel¹ wrote that the essential in the urban growth process is "the invisible". "The visible" reflects only the invisible needs, attitudes and processes.

We can single four principle subsystems which form an urban system:

a) population. The inhabitants with all individual characteristics and interrelations between all subjects may be analysed as a system belonging to the physical sphere (as bio-physical beings) as well as to the information sphere (as psycho-sociological subjects),

b) activities. The system of interrelated human activities is functioning also in both spheres. Within the physical sphere one may observe the displacements of commuters, goods, energy, and the processes of production, distribution, use and refuse. In non-physical sphere the flows of information link individuals and firms due to management, publicity, mass-media, educational and cultural processes etc.

c) physical environment, composed by natural and man-made

¹ Y. Barrel, La mode d'apprendre des systemes urbains. L'Institut de Perspective et Politique de Science. Grenoble 1973.

elements, basically belongs to the physical sphere. But it produces also the information (e.g. of esthetic character) influencing strongly the human psychology.

d) social and economic structures, forming the non-physical framework of human life. There exists a lot of those structures of a very different character. Familial, institutional and non-formalized social groups form a pattern of a societal organization. But there are other structures organizing people's minds and behaviours. We may list, as some examples, culture with hierarchy of values, languages and religions; law fixing the limits of acceptable behaviours; economy deciding about the opportunities and living conditions.

There does not exist a general theory of urban growth and functioning. An urban system influences all elements of people's life, and is a field of interest of many scientific disciplines. But each of them approaches the subject from its point of view, concentrating themselves on the closest sub-systems, looking at others as they would be in a far perspective.

Classic planning has the architectural roots. Its main field is the physical environment. By shaping "the visible" planners assume to influence "the invisible": to make people happy and economy healthy and efficient.

We may observe that the goals and objectives declared by planners are usually very broad and ambitious. But we may note, too, that the tools proposed for their achievement are very poor. Are these goals within the physical planners reach? This question seems to be of a crucial character. There are many differences in planning systems in individual countries, of course. But it seems to me that the presented scheme makes a distinction easy between urban planning understood as physical one and the field which has to be covered by planning of a comprehensive character. I will refer to it later on.

4. "A Plan" - Some Definitions

A plan is the output of the planning process. Its character decides about the whole planning methodology and organization of the planning systems. But the understanding of the plan's character is not identical. Each discipline involved in planning bases it on its own theories. In each dictionary one can find several definitions.

Let us make an effort to clarify the nature of the plans and the role they can perform.

It seems to me that it is necessary to divide plans into two main categories:

- 1) plans of defined objects or controlled systems, if we prefer to use systems terminology;
- 2) plans of actions undertaken by individual actors.

The first group answers the question, how an object looked like in the past, or looks now or will look in the future. It is to be noted that a plan is not necessarily linked to the future state. It may present an image of the past, too. Plans of medieval cities may serve as an example. We are discussing here, however, planning as a tool for shaping the future. So, I will concentrate only on plans of prospective and creative character.

We may distinguish three categories of the "object's plans": plans of structure, function and of growth process.

A Structure Plan projects the intended structure of a system. A design of a building, for example, is a plan of physical features of a controlled system. Plans of non-physical structures also exist, e.g., plans ^{of} the desired economic base.

A Function Plan consists of information on how to utilise a given object, or on how the component parts interact. We can speak of town's functioning, the functioning of a planning system, or the functioning of the national economy. This type of plan then refers to the execution of basic tasks in a given system and to the interaction of its respective elements, without involving any structural changes.

A Plan of Growth, on the other hand, deals with actual

structural changes. It outlines the consecutive phases of a system's transformation as well as defining the means and their application, the distribution of tasks, and cooperation with various institutions etc.

The second group of plans, plans of action, has to answer the question how an individual actor (man, household or firm) has to act to achieve his goals. Those plans are linked to a subject and not to an object like the first group.

Now, we may come back to our question about the character of urban plans. In traditional planning based on architectural roots, urban plans were understood as plans of physical structure of a town. Their role was to show the desired image of physical development of a given area. This content was not sufficient to control the process of growth. So, many efforts were undertaken to introduce the factor of time to the planning to give plans a dynamic character.

But to influence the growth we need to know how the public authorities have to act. So, a need for "plans of action" emerges and, in particular, plans of local authority actions.

It seems to me that speaking about planning we have to define well what kind of plans we expect to have. Is an urban plan: a plan of desired physical structure, a plan of dynamic growth of the urban complex system, or is it a plan of municipal activity?

In my opinion, all three kinds are needed. But the experience is not equal. Particularly it is rather poor in dynamic planning of growth process, which has to cover urban systems as described in previous chapter. The introduction of time as a factor makes planning much more complicated but much closer to the real needs of effective control of dynamic changes.

5. "Vertical" or "Horizontal" Planning System Organization?

Poland is now in a period of reorganization of management system which touches urban planning, too. New act on territorial planning is under preparation and a broad discussion on it was run in the country during recent years. It is impossible to

introduce here its whole scope, but it seems to be interesting a presentation of two general options. I will call it "vertical" and "horizontal" organizational patterns.

The "vertical" is based on an assumption that the main goal of the planning system is to work out an optimal territorial structure of population distribution, industrial location, land and natural resources use, physical developments, etc. Such a structure can be achieved during a longer period only, so the planning has to be oriented on a far time-horizon, and to present rather a static image.

The demand to "optimize" the structure leads to a complex national physical planning system based on a hierarchical pyramid: national physical plan, regional plans and local land use plans. Planning should be a continuous process and all plans should be worked out within a continuous dialogue between the levels: the directions going downwards and proposals - upwards.

This model reflects a centralized system where a hierarchy of interests is acknowledged and central authorities have power to decide about each issue they think is important.

The long time-horizon and the orientation on future structure lead to an autonomy of the above mentioned pyramid, which is viewed by the supporters of this model, as a vertical land use and locational management sector separated from economic planning.

Some of them asked even to organize a central physical planning body at the parliament independent from the government. They feel themselves capable to work out a plan of optimal physical structure which implemented will assure wealth and happiness.

There were also proposals to do planning not within the regional and municipal limits but according to functionally linked areas, because that is the only one way to work out an optimal territorial structure.

The other group of people opted for a "horizontal" model. They gave the priority not to structural optimization but to policy-making.

The "horizontal" link between physical and economic planning

and decision makers on each level was understood as the basic condition of an efficient policy.

This model was based on acknowledgement of local interests as different and independent of, and as autonomous to national interests. It assumed decentralization of power and resources giving possibilities to local and regional bodies to run their own policy. Comprehensive planning has to become a basis for local decision making. Higher level planning should be limited to create a framework for local plans and to coordinate them. Not any planning pyramid is needed.

In this case planning would have more active character and would be oriented on more current decisions. Long-term plans would have only strategic character necessary for goal setting.

Comparing two approaches we may say that the first was oriented on structure plans and the last on plans of action. The first one gave more decisive role to planning technocrats, the other one saw them more as advisors to local politicians.

In seventies Polish economy was very centralized as well as physical planning. The economic reform, being under way, is oriented on decentralization. It seems that urban planning should be decentralized, too. But it is very difficult to change not only management system but also people's attitudes. It needs time. So, now only first steps toward decentralization and "horizontal" model can be made. It is very difficult to foresee the future development.

6. Some Conclusions

It is impossible to conclude a paper which presents only some issues to be solved and some attitudes against them. It seems to me, however, obvious that a deep verification of basic planning paradigms is needed.

Planning must become more active. Drafting images for long future is not sufficient to control the development process. Physical planning closely linked to economic one should be a tool for comprehensive local policy. We need better plans of

action of dynamic character. We need new tools influencing economic growth. We need new planning theory and philosophy adequate to new issues of '80.

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POLSKIE DOŚWIADCZENIA I KONCEPCJA PLANOWANIA
NA LATA OSIEMDZIESIĄTE

Planowanie miejscowe opiera się na założeniu, że wzrost miast jest zjawiskiem stałym. Stąd koncentruje się głównie na kontroli procesów zabudowy i lokalizacji nowych obiektów. Jednocześnie wykształciło jedynie instrumenty realizacyjne o restryktywnym charakterze.

Ogólna recesja ekonomiczna udowodniła, że wzrost nie jest zjawiskiem trwałym. Stała się przez to jednym z powodów konieczności poszukiwania nowych koncepcji planowania.

Artykuł zawiera: 1) wprowadzenie do problemów rozwoju miast w Polsce; 2) kilka uwag o związkach pomiędzy jakością miast i efektywnością gospodarki narodowej; 3) koncepcję miasta jako systemu planowanego; 4) notatki o różnych rozumieniach pojęcia "plan"; 5) komentarz o dyskusji na temat organizacji systemu planowania w Polsce i 6) wnioski, które mogą raczej otworzyć dyskusję nad problemem.

Wnioski dotyczą konieczności nadania planowaniu aktywnego charakteru i ścisłego związania planowania z radami narodowymi obu szczebli. Plany zagospodarowania, nie przestając być planami struktur, powinny również spełniać rolę planów działania.