

Elements of spatial structure of urbanized areas - social aspects. Place - district - city - region.

Following the theme of past year's volume of Teka, dedicated to the problems of aesthetics of cities, in the current issue we propose to initiate a discussion on one of the most important aspects of cities, i.e. their social function. It is estimated that by 2050 60% of the Earth's population will live in cities or broadly understood urbanized areas. Therefore, we set the challenge for the authors: to undertake a discussion on selected aspects of the space of modern human life, on different scales of perception:

- attractors - motion generators: objects of great social significance, such as temples in the notion of *sacrum* and *profanum*; valuable public space, i.e. parks and squares; space that is a kind of "negative" for built-up areas,
- residential zone - work zone - leisure zone: hybrid versus monofunctional areas; Does the mixed functional structure of urban space work today?
- The evolution of the city's functions: a multi-functional city - an industrial city - a city of culture - a city of tourism - a city of business - Eco-City; Can the ideas of sustainable development be implemented in cities built on traditional principles and with a significant historical layout? Is it possible to maintain the principles of sustainable development only in cities built today from scratch?
- Atomization or merging? Does the increase of the area of cities have its justified limits? Urban fringe, transition zone between the city and rural areas - the agricultural landscape. How - in a sustainable manner - to shape the areas where the city meets the surrounding landscape?
- Greenery as a factor binding the city, permeating its structure from the scale of a single tree to the systemic network of green infrastructure.

Interpersonal relationships are shaped at the basic level of neighborly relations. The factor supporting their creation and strengthening are local social centers, such as market squares, clubs, places of worship and parks. Community integration is also forced by catastrophic events that permanently change people's mentality and shape the landscape anew. Interpersonal relationships have a special impact on external spaces, where the meeting of other people becomes forced. The concept of external spaces should be considered here in a meaning of J. Gehl and Ch. Alexander theories.

The modernist functional division scheme assumes a clear functional distribution of individual urban areas. Performance analyses of such a model of shaping the cities, indicates deficiencies and dysfunctions of this solution. The remedy proposed in the last years of the 20th century was the idea of *New Urbanism*, which, contrary to its name, postulates a return to the traditional principles of shaping the function and form of urban areas. Urban experiments - Poundbury casus - are conducted, in fact, aimed at creating small settlement units, modeled on historic cities. However, the weaknesses of this

solution are clear, in particular the scale that is too small, which is impossible to duplicate in a number that provides such a comfortable roof over the head of the entire population living in cities.

Initially, the cities were self-sufficient, containing all the functions necessary for the survival of its inhabitants. Gradually, however, cities began to specialize, which was reflected in their spatial and social structure. The historically shaped structure of cities in all parts of the world aimed to isolate the community from threats from natural environment. Hence the former metropolises, which are the basis of the spatial form of most of today's cities, are distant from the state of natural and social balance. The majority of their area are impermeable surfaces, water management is limited to channeling watercourses and draining rainwater smoothly outside the built-up area. At the same time, restrictions related to the protection of cultural heritage imposed on multilayered private interests, prevent the invitation of more nature into cities. It is hard to imagine demolishing a fragment of the historic center of Krakow, Siena, London to increase biodiversity in this area.

One of the great threats to the development of cities, noticed in scientific discussion, is the problem of excessive dispersion of their structure, spilling onto areas previously occupied by the agricultural function. So there is a change in the social structure of the suburbs that undergo transformation from the village, through the town, to the urban district. There is therefore a kind of "dilution" of the traditional relationship pattern, by introducing into the centuries-old system, the new inhabitants who are foreign to local traditions, behaviors and customs. Spreading cities in an unlimited way also results in a deterioration of access to high culture, educational or healthcare services. These are mainly associated with the limitations of the transport system of such large urban organisms. In addition, access to the range of ecosystem services offered by biologically active areas becomes increasingly restricted. Built-up areas also become increasingly more susceptible to extreme weather phenomena, which do not exert such a significant impact on the natural environment, characterized by much greater resilience than the built environment.

The remedy for the weaknesses of urbanised areas is the preservation of existing green areas and open waters as well as the creation of new natural areas. However, it is necessary to think systemically, where individual elements form an efficiently functioning system. Only comprehensive green infrastructure solutions, as defined by M. Benedict and E.T McMahon, will be important for the quality of life in cities. Punctual projects not related to other parts of the system, are too weak and become susceptible to adverse anthropogenic and climatic factors. A well-planned green infrastructure system offers numerous benefits for all types of ecosystem services, which includes support to create and maintain social relationships.

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