

SPACE MANAGEMENT INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Evidence from Poland

An abstract 3D graphic featuring several vertical bars of varying heights and colors (orange and blue). Some bars have double-headed arrows on top, and others have circular openings. The background is dark blue with a pattern of small white dots.

Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego

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Edited by
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Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego
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Introduction

August Lösch stated in 1961 that although people do not have a real influence on the times they live in, they have the ability to significantly affect the place they stay, reside, learn, farm, and work in. They can not only choose their place of residence, but also shape it. This kind of freedom has both positive and negative impact on the space, on its functionality, quality, and aesthetics. Nowadays many people are complaining about the quality of space, especially in cities. The question is, what recommendations should be taken under consideration by people managing the space and responsible for its quality. What should they do to meet the needs of local societies? Great social diversity, especially in cities, where people vary widely in origin, education, material status, sensitivity, and self-consciousness, makes it necessary to consider whether it is even possible to establish any spatial planning recommendations which would meet the needs of all interested.

Nowadays the term 'spatial order' is perceived as a reference base for shaping and managing space in Poland. This notwithstanding, the problem with defining this term accurately makes it impossible to explicitly interpret the law; moreover, there are no unified recommendations considering the processes of space management. On the one hand, such a situation has its own limitations as it allows for making mistakes during the spatial planning process; on the other, it gives people some freedom in shaping their space. After all, space should not be homogeneous and organized according to one

pattern. It has to serve the people who live in it. Numerous legal provisions obviously have an impact on space management, but it is first and foremost shaped by environmental conditions, natural landscape, history, culture, economic activities, entrepreneurship, aesthetic sensibility, social norms, and customs of people who live in a given area. However, many recommendations have been established in long-running studies on the principles of spatial planning that are supposed to ensure wellbeing, inspiration, and safety for all users of a given space – in other words, to make it possible to create a good place to live in and satisfy all social needs.

The main objective of this study was to analyse different legal, urban, architectural, natural, economic, and social factors which affect the final shape of a given space as well as the possibilities and methods of managing it in a way beneficial for the society. The idea behind the study was to apply an interdisciplinary approach to the issues connected with space management and spatial order. The contributors are employees of the Institute of Geography at the University of Gdańsk who are involved in research on spatial planning.

The issues raised in this study concern the contemporary specifics of the Polish territory as well as the historical context, especially legal provisions, economic changes and the political transformation which took place after the Second World War. All these issues are illustrated by numerous local examples from the Gdańsk agglomeration and the Pomerania region. However, the research presented is also based on the analysis of the utilitarian approach of regimes observed not only in Poland but all around the world. The Polish case serves merely as a background for further discussion.

The structure of the study reflects its main objective. It is divided into three sections, first of which deals with the legal and urban planning aspects of space management. The biggest impact on space management is made by urban planners and architects who decide on the actual shape of the introduced elements, their placement, dimensions and final appearance (i.a. colours, materials used). In Poland, space management is largely dictated by previous decisions and the existing infrastructure, often centuries-old. Knowledge, however, has evolved and the modern approach, so-called new urbanism, sees planning priorities, especially in urban space,

completely unlike the earlier approaches. The idea of giving cities back to the people along with the emphasis on increasing safety, convenience and aesthetic value are the main determinants for modern projects. Not everyone approves of the remnants of previous planning decisions made in Poland, first and foremost in the period after the Second World War, dominated by socialism. However, it should be remembered that they were made based on different laws and ideology. Urban planners have to follow the law, so if we really want to change our space, we must start by changing the law – both the general planning targets of local spatial development plans and specific standards such as acceptable roadway widths or distances between buildings and other facilities. Space is shaped according to the way we understand spatial order, which manifests itself mainly in public, not private, spaces. Today we can see a clash of different views on space, understandings of spatial order, aesthetics and priorities in planning. That is why it is so important to regulate the basic aspects of space management and thus determine the appropriate approach to spatial development in Poland.

Space management is based primarily on the letter of the law – but, as it turns out, the law is not fully respected or it is not enough to ensure the creation of spaces friendly for their residents. In *Principles of Spatial Order Protection and Development in Space Management Plans of Selected Communes of the Gdańsk Agglomeration*, Alicja K. Zawadzka draws attention to the problems of space management from the point of view of legal aspects in Poland, the attitude of the authorities, urban planners and architects at the interface between the old and the new era. The author analyses legal acts on local spatial development plans adopted in the period from the beginning of 2010 until the first half of 2013 in selected communes of the Gdańsk agglomeration. What is more, all resolutions on changes to local spatial development plans adopted during that period were also analysed, as the Act of 27 March 2003 on Local Government states that any changes to local plans are introduced using the same procedure used when adopting a new plan. The legal obligation for spatial planning to take into consideration the principles of shaping and protecting spatial order while the very legal definition of ‘spatial order’ is blurred and multi-criterial and the

principles themselves are insufficiently specified may cause problems with the wording of the provisions of local law. The main aim of the analysis is to evaluate the way in which the said legal obligation is fulfilled by the authorities of the selected communes of the Gdańsk agglomeration.

Spatial order has obviously been lost in Polish cities, but the question whether and how it can be restored is currently under public debate. In *The Importance of Public Urban Interiors in the Process of Shaping Spatial Order in Cities*, Artur Kostarczyk, EngD, diagnoses the situation of Polish cities using the example of the Gdańsk agglomeration and attempts to find a way to restore spatial order. In Poland, the most fundamental problem of urban planning is the mass – and, what is worse, unnoticeable – disappearance of public spaces. The issue causes no public outcry, no protests, gets no media coverage. It is a consequence of the decay of the culture of space management, but also a postcolonial heritage of modern history. Nowadays, urban designers face a dilemma of whether to design a static (total, totalitarian) ‘space order’ or to follow the philosophy of constant, organic and self-sustaining development. It seems that the appropriate principles of continual development of any given space can be found in the postmodern paradigm of the philosophy of science that takes advantage of the general systems theory and recent developments in mathematics (fractals, chaos theory), which point to a dynamic harmony rather than static order.

The second section presents three takes on the environmental determinants of space management and explains the limits the environment puts on space management and the main conflicts arising in our interactions with the environment when it comes to spatial development. This issue is also discussed with respect to marine space taking into account its natural and economic specificity. Possible solutions to the aforementioned conflicts are also provided, including those directly related to human needs and interests of enterprises.

Contemporary space management should be guided primarily by the principles of spatial order and sustainable development. Sustainable development by definition means the pursuit of economic and social development while protecting the natural environment. Ensuring spatial order is also connected with the reconciliation of people’s aesthetic values and

their inherent need to stay in touch with nature. And yet, even though spatial development is necessarily linked to environmental protection, the economic and social activity of man interferes with the environment, changing it and stripping it of its values, which makes the establishment of appropriate regulations imperative.

Environmental factors were always taken into account by people conscious of the impact of their activity on the environment. It is therefore baffling that nowadays they are perceived as less important than economic or social considerations. A balance between environmental, social and economic factors in space management leading to the harmony of these areas should be the aim of sustainable space planning. As noted by Professor Mariusz Kistowski in *Natural Determinants of Space Management*, the problems with sustainable space management in Poland, which have been increasing dynamically for the last two decades, make it paramount to keep highlighting the significance of the environmental determinants of space management, especially if Poland wants to find itself at the top of life quality rankings along with Scandinavian and Western European countries, Australia and New Zealand.

Some additional environmental determinants of space management should be taken into consideration for coastal areas. The main aim of marine spatial planning is to maintain a proper balance between socio-economic development and protection of the marine environment through an open planning process that facilitates the creation of a catalogue of solutions ameliorating possible conflicts and lowering the costs of space management. Until recently, an ecocratic approach was prevailing – more attention was paid to protecting the environment than to achieving a consensus in relation to human activity on the sea. In *Marine Conditions of Spatial Order*, Professor Tadeusz Palmowski outlines the concept of integrated marine space management that allows to preserve marine ecosystems, mitigate the results of human activity, ameliorate conflicts related to the exploitation of the sea, and maximize the gains from a sustainable use of marine resources. However, as marine areas of a given country – its internal and territorial waters as well as its economic zone – are widely differentiated, marine spatial planning cannot follow one pattern.

The final shape and appearance of a given anthropogenic space is affected by many factors, crucially by the objects placed therein, often connected with human economic activity. In fact, this activity dominates the natural environment. However, many entrepreneurs and authorities still do not understand or even disregard its negative impact on the environment. Luckily, the world is becoming increasingly aware that people contribute to the ecological catastrophe whose results may be irreversible and destabilize the civilization. That is why a radical action should be taken in order to reduce the impact of human activity on the environment. Professor Zdzisław Kordel and Dr Grażyna Chaberek-Karwacka explain the complex issue of reconciling ecological and economic considerations in *Internalization of Environmental Costs as an Economic Problem of Space Management*. As the negative environmental effects of economic activity often escape the mechanisms of market self-regulation, the so-called environmental thinking have to follow the rules of a system approach and some doctrines of financial thinking have to be changed. Attaining the ecological objectives of sustainable development requires taking the environmental effects of economic activity into account when considering the economic balance of a company.

People's ideas for space development primarily affect other people. They directly affect the functionality of a space and its ability to meet its users' needs, including those related to mobility, aesthetics, comfort and security – in other words, the quality of life. Of course, every person is different, has different tastes, is at a different stage in their life, has different needs. Nevertheless, we can identify numerous targets of space management whose achievement is beneficial for an overwhelming majority of users. This, however, requires taking into account many social, cultural, historical, economic and political factors as well as involving the users of a given space in the process. Since space is shaped by people and for people, the starting point of space management have to be the diagnosis of the population status of the area.

The third section begins with a presentation of the current demographic situation in Poland, with a more detailed description of the Pomerania region, where the Gdańsk agglomeration is located, as it is this data that tells us most about the future needs of people living in a given area. The age

structure of a population is of great importance for urban planning, primarily in terms of ensuring safety and mobility. Space also has to fulfil cultural needs of its users, in Poland largely connected with tradition and religion, and should serve to educate next generations by developing their aesthetic sensitivity, historical awareness, and sense of responsibility. This goal is partly achieved by encouraging citizen participation in space management. Of course, involving residents in the process is not easy, especially in countries like Poland, where citizen participation is a recent thing and people have little experience with it. Lack of knowledge, reluctance to engage in a discussion and work out a compromise with various stakeholders lead to problems in joint decision-making.

In *Social and Demographic Changes and Their Influence on Space Management*, Aleksandra Cicharska, MSc, notes that space management should always take the people into consideration. To ensure a proper understanding of their needs, analysing data on demographic tendencies and projections is needed, which will allow to enhance their quality of life and prevent negative processes taking place in the urban space. Unfortunately, modern cities are too big, too diversified and managed from the top down. Therefore, a real chance for development, especially for the most creative yet unruly societies, is collective and voluntary self-control. In *Citizen Participation in Space Management*, Professor Mariusz Czepczyński and Katarzyna Szotucha, MSc, point to social dialogue as the primary factor affecting the process of spatial development – a tool that makes it possible to prevent and ameliorate everyday socio-spatial problems and conflicts arising between the users of the same space.

Dr Lucyna Przybylska discusses the link between broadly understood spatial order and cultural landscape in *Socio-Spatial Processes in the Cultural Landscape of Poland*. The main objective of her study is to present the principal changes that occurred in the Polish cultural landscape in the period of 24 years after the political transformation. The author describes issues connected with culture in space and a wide range of factors and dilemmas related to social and cultural changes using a process-like approach. She applies other researchers' conceptualizations of changes in a cultural landscape on a broader, national scale. The photographic documentation and

examples used come from the research material gathered within the framework of the project ‘Sacralisation of Public Spaces in Poland’ in 2012–2014.

The study concludes with some considerations on how space itself affects its users, their attitudes and perception. Research has shown that the space in which people spend their time directly affects their behaviour and attitude towards shaping it. Living in a well-organized and well-planned space teaches people how to manage space properly. The role of schools is especially important as that is where young people spend much of their time while their sense of aesthetics and views are formed. In her paper *Examples of Good Practice in Teaching Spatial Order and Space Aesthetic*, Aleksandra Sęk, MSc, analyses the spatial order in educational facilities – both the interiors of selected buildings and objects in their immediate vicinity, attempting to assess whether they are in keeping with their surroundings. Her main aim is to draw attention to the importance of spatial order in education and to describe educational space as teachers understand it. The paper ends with a classification of the analysed spaces and a presentation of some positive and negative examples of educational space management.

The studies included in this publication confirm the equal importance of legal, economic, social, cultural and environmental factors for effective space management. Having analysed these factors in the Polish reality, we can conclude that the social awareness of the importance of space and its development possibilities is growing. There is an increasing social awareness of the meaning of spatial order and sustainable development and sense of joint responsibility especially for urban spaces. This slowly finds its reflection in the law on urban planning and spatial development, in the attention paid by local governments to the quality of local space and in the implementation of pro-environmental attitudes in business operations of enterprises.

These changes, however, do not take place as fast as the postulates of sustainable development and raising the quality of life would have it, partly because the provisions of law are often too vague. There is no consistency between the legal definition of spatial order and the requirement to establish the principles of its development and protection in local spatial development plans. Moreover, there are no standards on the scope and

way of formulating the regulations. Another reason is that only 25% of the Polish territory is covered by local development plans, which is why local policies are carried out by means of administrative decisions. However, it should be emphasized that even if 100% of a given commune was covered by local plans it would not guarantee an increased quality of space as there are many other factors in play often not directly related to spatial planning, i.e., the socio-economic situation of country, attitude to local cultural and environmental values, educational background of local societies, sense of aesthetics, and even the propriety of space users.

Many changes should also be made in the private sector. The internalization of environmental costs necessitates adjustments in the business environment, largely affecting companies' expenses. Some alterations will most likely occur in the existing market structures and procedures, e.g. market partners and supply chains. It seems that the most visible effect of external costs internalization will be the attempt to adjust the production processes to new legal provisions in a way that allows not to pay the environmental costs. This reconfiguration will have an undeniable spatial dimension as well.

Grażyna Chaberek

PART I

**LEGAL AND URBAN
PLANNING ASPECTS OF
SPACE MANAGEMENT**

ALICJA K. ZAWADZKA

Principles of Spatial Order Protection and Development in Space Management Plans of Selected Communes of the Gdańsk Agglomeration

Due to the growing importance of high-quality spaces the issue of spatial order is widely discussed not only by urban planners and architects, but also by representatives of other disciplines, e.g. geographers, sociologists, economists and historians. Kołodziejcki (1991: 88) states that 'spatial order is perceived as more and more significant in the hierarchy of social values. It is becoming an important element of life quality, natural environment and management efficiency'. According to Gzell (2008: 17), 'creating spatial order must become a universally visible process and all attempts to achieve success must be repeated'. Zuziak (2007: 13) agrees with this statement and claims that a 'theoretical implementation of the idea of spatial order and its practical application to urban space are the most important tasks of urban planners'. Paying attention to broadly understood space is most essential as the consequences of spatial decisions are long-lasting and often irreversible. The term 'spatial order' in relation to urban planning was first introduced in the 1960s (Bałtuć 1981). An analysis of over 20 definitions of spatial order (Kopeć 2010; Zawadzka, Kopeć 2005a; 2005b) has shown that there is some disagreement in this respect. Sometimes it is referred to as the 'actual' state of space (Chojnicki 1992: 13) or 'space organization'

(Gruszkowski 1989: 26), other times as the 'desirable' (Pankau 2001: 283) or 'expected' state of space (Włodarczyk 2000: 158). For other researchers spatial order is more intangible, they see it as the 'final objective' of spatial development (Pankau 1996: 119), an 'overriding cultural idea' (Zuziak 2007: 13) or a 'need' (Lendzion 1996: 113; Furman 2001: 245). However, most authors agree that the achievement of spatial order is made possible by using certain tools or mechanisms.

The importance of spatial order has also been emphasized in the most significant national strategic document on land management – the National Spatial Development Concept 2030, further referred to as NSDC 2030 (KPKZ), which sets the following objectives of the national spatial development policy:

- improve the competitiveness of major urban centres through functional integration and preservation of the pro-cohesive polycentric settlement structure;
- enhance internal cohesion and balance the territorial development across regions by using their potential, promoting functional integration, creating conditions for spreading development factors, and multi-functional development of rural areas;
- improve connectivity in different dimensions by developing transport and telecommunications infrastructure;
- develop spatial structures by supporting the preservation of high-quality natural environment and landscape;
- enhance spatial structure's resilience to natural disasters and loss of energy security and develop spatial structures supporting national defence capabilities;
- restore and consolidate spatial order.

These objectives must not be treated separately as they are closely interrelated and complementary (KPKZ: 73). It seems that the last objective acknowledges the negative state of Polish space. The objectives presented in the NSDC 2030 'correspond to the most important challenges to the development of the Polish territory: low competitiveness of the major urban centres and Polish regions compared to their European counterparts, weak territorial cohesion of Poland and low level of infrastructure development



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