A City Game: Guidelines and Recommendations for Contemporary Urban Policy

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Abstract. Cities are settlement units with a very diverse genesis and character. However, most of them are affected by similar, degrading social, economic and spatial phenomena. Solving city problems requires special attention and a very individual approach when looking for alternative functions, development opportunities and ways to improve the quality of life of their residents. The changes that constantly occur in the structure of the settlement network, as well as changing visions of shaping cities and problems related to such phenomena as: shrinking of cities, depopulation, suburbanization, metropolisation, climate change, etc. cause the need to answer the questions: what is the contemporary city vision and what contemporary urban policy should be in this connection. In order to solve the problems constructed in this way, several research methods and techniques were used. Among other things, a query was made of selected urban strategic documents and an analysis of the literature on the subject. On this basis, the vision of a modern city was determined. In the next stage of work, a proposal was prepared of a set of desirable directions of urban development and actions necessary for local government units to undertake in the area of spatial planning and development. These activities should support the qualitative and sustainable development of cities. This is the answer to social, environmental and economic needs. Nowadays, it is essential for improving the quality of life and planning for the benefit of future generations. Referring to the developed vision of the city, the author of the article presented recommendations that were divided into topics: compact and sustainable city, strong, efficiently managed, coherent, competitive, attractive and creative. An important element of contemporary urban policy seems to be the exchange of experiences between cities, promotion of examples of good practices and still underestimated social participation.

1. Introduction
Contemporary urban policy is largely focused on implementing the idea of sustainable development as a paradigm for the development of 21st century cities. It should be understood that there is no single, universal model of a sustainable city. Balancing development is not the state we are heading to. It is a dynamic process that occurs in the structure of the city. And any change in the balance of one of the elements of this structure entails a disturbance in the order and functioning of the others. The overriding goal of urban policy is, therefore, balancing development in the sense of responding to processes in the city structure and striving to improve the quality of this structure and the quality of life of residents.
Negative phenomena that have occurred in cities in the last few decades result, among others, from a lack of resources, negligence or improper spatial policy. As observations show, usually new visions of urban policy and shaping the spatial structure of cities result from a critique of previous theories and actions, and from the pursuit of an ideal state (although this ideal is understood very differently). Changing visions of shaping cities, relations that occur between elements of the spatial structure, and above all negative phenomena, such as depopulation, aging of the society, suburbanization, shrinking of cities, climate change, etc. raise questions about what a modern city should be like and what contemporary urban policy should be in this connection.

2. Methods
Several research methods and techniques have been used to answer the above questions. These were, inter alia: a historical and interpretative method in which modern urban concepts were explored and a vision of a contemporary city developed using the query technique of selected urban strategic documents and comparative analyzes. In addition, at various stages of research, a quantitative and statistical research method was used, among others, for comparative analyzes of building compactness. The method of qualitative research, including local visions, non-participating observations and the like, was also used to analyze spatial order and ways of using selected urban spaces.

In the next stage of work, a proposal was prepared of a set of desirable directions of urban development and actions necessary for local government units to undertake in the area of spatial planning and development. These recommendations include the following issues: shaping space, investment policy, demography and urban resource management, social participation, transport, low-carbon and energy efficiency, economic development.

Details of the conducted research, as well as more complete answers to the questions posed, have been described in more detail in the book Small cities in the era of sustainable development [1]. In this article, due to the limited amount of space, only selected issues are presented.

3. Vision
Analysis of current urban concepts [2], as well as documents regarding the problems of shaping modern cities has led to the formulation of the main features that a city should have. For example, the New Athens Charter: Vision of 21st Century Cities, published in Lisbon in 2003, illustrates the changes that have taken place in city planning at the end of the 20th century. According to this, modern cities: preserve cultural richness and diversity and skilfully combine their present and future with the past; are connected in a network; are creative and competitive; are able to cooperate; contribute decisively to the well-being and comfortable life of their inhabitants; harmoniously combine the urban environment with the natural environment [3]. For the author, on the other hand, the vision of a modern city is a balanced and compact city, strong, well managed, with coherent policy, competitive, attractive and creative.

3.1. Compact and sustainable city
Modern city should primarily be sustainable and compact. Especially the first of the concepts is very broad. It also includes the pursuit of: spatial order, low-carbon economy, high energy efficiency, adaptation and mitigation to climate change (among others by reducing urban heat islands, drainage basins, reducing sealed surfaces), environmental protection (including corridors and ecological islands and ventilation channels), development of blue-green infrastructure, air protection. On the other hand, in a compact city, effective development of space, including inward development, stopping suburbanization, revitalization and sustainable transport is the most important [1].
The city space in the context of sustainable development can be treated as a valuable resource, often non-renewable on the scale of human life expectancy. Therefore, planning should be approached with future generations in mind. Meanwhile, many unfavorable phenomena occur in urban space. One of them is inconsistent and inefficient shaping of space in city centers, which often results in its degradation. At the same time, it is accompanied by developer pressure and uncontrolled development of urban fabric in suburban areas. As a result, the buildings are chaotically dispersed, creating extensive zones that do not have the typical functions of a city or village. These are estates with a low urban standard, poor equipment in infrastructure and public services. In most cases, these phenomena result from the ineffectiveness of the spatial planning system and too much "building freedom". As a result, part of the urban space becomes unpredictable, conflict-generating, inefficient, and therefore unattractive [4].

Already in 1961, Jane Jacobs recommended the use of appropriate building density, reduction of transport needs, mixing functions and raising the profile of the neighborhood [5]. This means that the city should be shaped in a compact and compact way, and functions should be appropriately assigned to the place in the spatial structure. A compact urban structure is the basis for the efficient and rational use of its internal (endogenous) resources. It is also opposition to the disappearance and "blurring" of the urban character, which distinguishes the city from the countryside. As part of shaping a compact, sustainable city, it is necessary to keep balances of real demand for residential areas in relation to the areas designated for them in planning studies. This allows you to revise "overestimated" studies and local plans.

For a modern city, compact space is directly related to building intensity. This will mainly mean seeking opportunities for rational thickening. In the first place it should concern the city center, and then its further parts. Development parameters should be adopted and recorded in planning documents so that a natural urban gradient is created, determined by the density and dimensions of the development, as well as functions appropriate to the zone of occurrence (Transect). Increasing the intensity of development will reduce the costs associated with the implementation of new technical infrastructure, and above all help shape the clear urban layout and achieve spatial order. Transect as a component of Smart Code is, according to New Urbanism, a proposal of good urban principles. It is useful in determining: the nature of the landscape, urban functions and building density, location / form / dimensions of buildings, street widths, urban green tree species [1].

In turn, detailed urban indicators and building parameters included in the plans are an opportunity for consistent for the entire compact building area: density of this area, and thus increasing the compactness of the city structure, counteracting the chaotic development of dispersed buildings, shaping a zone with a typically urban character and shaping spatial order. It is vital to clearly define terms such as: urban area, compact construction and the built-up area, and then setting mandatory in local planning documents "built-up areas" and preparing them for the detailed development plans. Wherein compact construction here should be understood as a grouping, a minimum number of buildings (for individual determination in each country or region, for example at least 10 houses) with the exception of buildings with only economic function, between which the greatest distance of neighboring buildings do not exceeds a certain number of meters (also for individual determination, e.g. 50 m). It should be emphasized that by calculating the absorbency of non-built-up areas in the "compact development area" as well as in the "urbanized area", it will be possible to better shape the compact functional and spatial structure. The absorption capacity of land free from development is understood here as the total area of flats obtainable in those areas. Moreover, it would be advisable to adopt the principle that urban infrastructure investments should be implemented first in the "densely built-up area", then in the "urbanized area", and finally in the undeveloped areas (greenfields).
Figure 1. Compact spatial structure – Krakow – city center (source: geoportal)

Figure 2. Low density spatial structure – Krakow – Giewdzinska/Kobierzynska Street (source: geoportal)
Figure 3. Nowa Huta - the socialist realist district of Krakow (source: geoportal)

Figure 4. Krakow – Old Town (source: geoportal)
3.2. Strong city

According to modern urban policy, the city should also be strong to have the best position in the settlement structure. It should be a center for its functional area or a local center for surrounding rural areas. The development of services and entrepreneurship will strengthen the links between cities and surrounding rural areas. Thus, it will strengthen their role as local centers and facilitate the development of small-scale, concentric city-rural systems.

A strong city also means an independent city based on its own potential. The main purpose of such a city, and this applies primarily to sub-regional and local centers, is to strengthen its own economic strength. An important role in this case is played by well-developed local entrepreneurship, which may be specialized, but not monofunctional. Strengthening potential and increasing opportunities in today's economy can be achieved by joining producers into associations, chambers, clusters, etc. This is particularly advisable in the case of local specialization, which occurs in some smaller urban centers. This facilitates the use of cooperators' experiences and contacts, increases development opportunities and facilitates the possibility of obtaining external support [1].

A strong city is also a city that has the ability to stop depopulation severely weakening many cities in the world. It is a city that adapts to economic, environmental, political and climate changes. A strong city is also a well-managed city with a coherent spatial policy, cooperating with neighboring municipalities as part of functional urban areas. Thanks to this cooperation, better things are possible: developing spatial and infrastructural integration, developing local labor markets, environmental protection, and resource and financial management.

Most modern cities have ceased to be self-sufficient. They require support from national and regional policies, as well as under European cohesion policy. In the long term, these cities should seek to strengthen and return to independence.

3.3. An efficient city, effectively managed

City development management should be a comprehensive and multi-faceted process. So it's hard not to mention the social aspect. The analysis shows that a modern city should be operational. This means, above all, effective management with the participation of the public. Both society and a sense of community should be understood as another important internal resource of the city, requiring the best use. This applies to both planning activities (including revitalization) and various types of actions undertaken in the city space.

Social participation should not be treated as a legally imposed obligation accompanying spatial planning and extending the necessary procedures, and thus limited to the minimum necessary. Neglecting the social factor in planning may cause the project to be misunderstood with the needs of the local community, its lack of acceptance for planned ventures or inactivity in the expected area. Jane Jacobs in the world-famous book "The Life and Death of Great American Cities" stated that "cities have the ability to provide something to everyone, only because and only when they are created by everyone" [5]. The active attitude of stakeholders and the sense of shared responsibility for city space can be shaped. This is done, among others, by Initial education on "understanding" plans, their types and planning procedures. The right selection of participatory methods and tools is also of great importance - relatively attractive to social partners and adapted to the specificity of a given city. It is known, however, that in the planning process cooperation of local government administration with social partners, including cooperation between various social groups, is necessary and brings real spatial, social and economic benefits.

In different countries, social participation is conducted to a different extent, it is often overlooked or takes place to the minimum necessary extent from a legal point of view. There is often the
conviction that participation only complicates and extends planning procedures. Therefore, it is proposed to change the regulations and introduce the obligation of public consultations already at the stage of commencing the preparation of local planning studies. Awareness of the benefits of local stakeholder involvement and conflict reduction at the beginning of planning work should also be shaped among officials. Changes in the awareness and competence of local government administration employees, planners and major stakeholders of spatial planning will increase the activity and openness of the social side, and at the same time increase the professionalism of the people responsible in the city and commune offices for preparing planning documents and communication with residents.

Local governments often need support in how they communicate with the public, as well as the ability to negotiate and resolve conflicts. It should also be taken into account that in some countries there may be a need to develop support mechanisms at national level in the form of grants and training for socialized spatial planning, targeted at officials and stakeholders of planning processes. Grant projects of this type should in particular be targeted at cities where: planning documents are being prepared or amended, there is significant development pressure, a small number of participants are involved in the consultation processes (low social activity), there are few NGOs, there is a large number protesting or appealing plans, no in-depth, engaging methods of social participation have yet been used.

A serious problem of small towns is the systematic decrease of the population - especially educated, of working age, creative and opinion-forming. Stopping the outflow of population is associated with improving the broadly understood quality of life, including improving housing conditions, job opportunities, accessibility and quality of services, quality of public spaces, etc. It is necessary to improve the competence and skills of the local community in order to activate it and economic development of the city. Restricting the outflow of population can occur by creating bottom-up activities under the slogan don't move: improve! [1]

3.4. A city coherent / with a coherent policy
An important goal of urban policy is also to create a coherent city. Coherent, i.e. managed on the basis of well-known potential and a coherent development policy. It covers social, environmental, economic and spatial aspects. The structural change of a given area occurs through the modernization of the urban fabric and the restoration of economic and social activity there, which results in an improvement in the quality of life of the inhabitants. Actions undertaken in this field bring the best effects when they are concentrated, well planned, effective and coordinated with other settlement units of the region [4]. Urban regeneration processes should be coherent and complementary. It is necessary to implement integrated regeneration measures, which integration should occur both locally and at the regional level. It should be remembered that programmed effects cannot be achieved without public involvement.

Public tasks, especially those beyond the boundaries of a single administrative unit, would be advisable to be implemented in close cooperation with neighboring units. This applies to tasks of small towns, such as: investments in transport infrastructure, bicycle routes, waste management, environmental protection, use of renewable energy sources, revitalization, etc. Cooperation can take various forms, including associations of municipalities.

One of the main goals of a coherent urban policy should also be to reduce the so-called low emissions from coal combustion in individual heating devices. The situation may be further aggravated by individual geographical and spatial conditions. In this situation, the following can be helpful: exchange of good practices, development of a flagship project showing the transformation of the city towards low-emission, maximally closed energy circulation, as well as promotion of this type of projects by, for example, granting an annual award for the best implementation in this field.
3.5. A competitive city
According to the vision of a modern city, it should be competitive. This means both job creation and high quality public spaces with a wide range of services and well-developed infrastructure. The competitive city also has a friendly business climate for small and medium enterprises, is economically active, and human resources are adapted to the needs of the market.

Public spaces in cities perform very important functions. It is therefore important to introduce such urban policy instruments that will support city governments in activities that enrich the offer of services in public spaces in the city center. In turn, as part of the policy of individual cities, local self-governments should monitor the degree and manner of using public spaces (e.g. by behavioral mapping, place observation forms, etc.). The data obtained in this way may become the basis for better programming and management of public spaces and stimulation of social activity in these spaces.

As we read in the National Urban Policy, "the goal of local government should be to achieve sustainable mobility in the functional area of the city, understood as traveling in such an amount and length as it results from satisfying the life needs of travelers traveling rationally using individual urban transport subsystems" [4]. This issue applies to both large and small cities. Implementation of sustainable mobility strategies in functional areas requires extensive cooperation with neighboring administrative units. In striving to balance the city, it is important to reduce transport needs by shaping the most compact spatial structure possible. Comprehensive cycling infrastructure development programs are needed.

3.6. Attractive and creative city
An important goal of urban policy is also to build the city's attractiveness. To a large extent, this is related to the city's offering a good quality of life to its residents. Therefore, the city will be attractive: authentic, drawing on its cultural and natural heritage, having features that will prevent people from migrating from it. It is also a city with well-developed services and health care. The city's attractiveness is also associated with the urban landscape - interesting and well-kept, high-quality public spaces and widely understood hospitality for tourists. An attractive city is a city good to live in, i.e. also safe and accessible.

In turn, shaping a creative city is based on developing it inward, among others, thanks to a good recognition of its potential, the use of modern technologies and inspiration from examples of good practices. In this case, cooperation with other settlement units may apply to both supra-local investments and organization of cyclical cultural events.

Balancing the development of small towns also requires paying more attention to regional and national contexts. Linking local activities, i.e. internal urban policies, for example, to activities at national level, can bring positive results. However, it should be taken into account that not all cities will survive the unfavorable situation: demographic, economic and spatial. Some of them are less likely to survive and may be subject to degradation and gradual absorption by other settlement units.

4. Results and discussions
Recycling of urban areas and a real increase in the efficiency of space use has the potential to shape a compact, multifunctional structure of cities. This will allow to achieve integrated order and develop sustainable mobility, and may even have a positive impact on the urban nature of the landscape. It may also have an impact on the increase in the quality of public spaces and the increase in activity of residents in these spaces.

The presented vision of a compact, sustainable, strong, efficient, coherent, competitive, attractive and creative city is a very optimistic vision. It should be remembered that not all cities will manage to
achieve the above goals. To a large extent it will depend on the ability to use the internal potential, the quality of city management and the awareness and commitment of residents.

Despite the projected loss of population and aging of the population, in some cities there will be development, based on endogenous potential, directed inwards, which will serve to balance the development of these cities and improve the quality of life of residents. As a result, depopulation of these cities may slow down in the long run, and their role in the settlement system may strengthen. They can become local development centers, and some of them will develop new functions.

5. Conclusions
Sustainable urban development is a response to both social, environmental and economic needs. Nowadays, it is necessary to improve the quality of life and planning for future generations. An important element of implementing the idea of sustainable development seems to be the exchange of experiences between cities (thanks to e.g. programs in which they participate), promoting so-called examples of good practices and the still undervalued involvement of the inhabitants themselves.

The integration of the visions of the modern city described in the article can lead to the creation of a compact city, accessible on foot and by bicycle, with a proper communication and nature system, equipped with modern technological achievements. Including some guidelines of the Urban Code (Smart Code) would ensure obtaining a clear spatial structure of urban units with various forms of development and functions, equipped with well-designed public spaces and economically using technical infrastructure.

Limiting the spread of buildings and the confluence of individual settlement units will occur through: delimitation of urbanized areas and areas of limited development, as well as a policy of limiting the implementation of new infrastructure in greenfields. In order to counteract urban sprawl, one can take protection of agricultural and forest land and the implementation of green rings around the most urbanized areas. Finally, it should be emphasized that none of the visions of shaping cities is completely complete and universal, nor should it be treated as independent.

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