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Nowa otwarta przestrzeń publiczna jako element krajobrazu w procesie rewitalizacji : przegląd literatury światowej

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NOWA OTWARTA PRZESTRZEŃ PUBLICZNA JAKO ELEMENT KRAJOBRAZU W PROCESIE REWITALIZACJI. PRZEGLĄD LITERATURY ŚWIATOWEJ

Streszczenie. W obecnej literaturze od dziesięciu lat obserwuje się rosnące znaczenie funkcji otwartych przestrzeni publicznych. Mówi się, że miasta są kształtowane dzięki międzyludzkim spotkaniom, które potrzebują miejsc publicznych, spokojnych i bezpiecznych. Dla życia miejskiego ważne są ulice i rynki w centrum oraz w otaczających dzielnicach. Ludzie spotykają się w tych publicznych i półpublicznych przestrzeniach, gdzie korzystać mogą ze sklepów i restauracji. W rzeczywistości miasta żyją dzięki tym miejscom. W przyszłości te cechy specyficzne dla urbanistyki będą coraz bardziej rozpoznawalne także na terenach wiejskich i podmiejskich, gdzie krajobraz oraz życie społeczne ulega przemianom.

Główna literatura przedmiotu w szeroki sposób ukazuje problem przekształcania zdegradowanych terenów miejskich oraz temat przestrzeni publicznych. Zaniedbane tereny o bogatej historii, jak dawne tereny kolejowe, przemysłowe, militarne, portowe, dawne lotniska, czy po prostu obszary zniszczone na skutek działalności człowieka, o specyfice zniszczeń miejskiej i wiejskiej jako nieużytki itd. posiadają duży potencjał przekształceń.

Zasadniczym tematem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie stanu wiedzy, składającego się głównie z literatury, na temat procesu tworzenia otwartych przestrzeni publicznych jako metody odnowy urbanistycznej i ruralistycznej. Szeroka analiza, przede wszystkim źródeł zagranicznych, stanowi tło badawcze.

Analizy tego tematu mogą być bardzo inspirujące dla przyszłych rozwiązań przestrzennych.

Słowa kluczowe: nowe przestrzenie publiczne, proces i aspekty przestrzennej rewitalizacji, tereny zdegradowane

NEW PUBLIC OPEN SPACES AS A LANDSCAPE ELEMENT IN THE PROCESS OF URBAN RENEWAL. REVIEW OF WORLD LITERATURE.

Abstract. In the present literature the meaningful and growing function of public open spaces has been observed for the last 10 years. It is said that cities are shaped by interpersonal meetings, which need public, peaceful, and secure places¹. For urban life, important are streets and markets in the centre and in residential districts. People meet in public and semipublic spaces with shops and restaurants. In reality, cities live thanks to these places. In the future, this urban feature will be even more recognizable also in rural and suburban areas, where the landscape and social life changes over time.

The world literature broadly describes the problem of the re-use of neglected urban sites and the issue of pedestrian areas. Blighted sites filled with rich history such as former industrial, railway, military, harbor, and airport areas, or other blighted urban and rural areas such as wasteland, brownfields and greenfields possess a wealth of potential.

The main subject of the paper is the description of the state of knowledge, mostly consisting of research literature, on the creation of public open spaces as a method for urban and rural

¹ "A city lives in its streets and squares, in the centre and in the districts, in its public and semi-public places, with markets and restaurants. A city lives from the people who meet each other in these spaces. Meetings need space, calm, and anxiety-free surroundings. We look into the future..." (Grüne Liste Baden, Grünsozial, Switzerland, 2006, s. 1). Translation from German: author.

renewal. An insightful survey of mostly foreign (European) success stories constitutes the research background for this paper.

The analysis of this issue may be very inspiring for the generation of spatial solutions in the future.

Keywords: new public open spaces, process and aspects of spatial revitalization, neglected areas.

Introduction. Research method

The paper includes an analysis of the research literature in the area of public spaces from an urban planning as well as rural perspective. It is based on a 2014 international online database. A total of 1,715,692 papers on new public spaces were found using its search engine. Additional criteria and time constraints were used to narrow down this collection to 115 papers. The number of papers was also limited to those in the English language and peer reviewed.

The subject of this paper is strongly linked with issues in urban planning. However, some researchers also find links with politics, sociology, economics, literature, finance, and related issues. Some of the terms used in the identified research papers to describe issues associated with the process of creating new streets and public squares include urban growth, interactive projects, active urban planning, future of cities, smart cities, as well as new technologies.

Creation of public spaces – world review

Reading the research literature, one can find features of public spaces inspired by the modern world. The purpose of some papers is to rethink the political ecology related with public spaces in cities (Domingues Rubio, Fogue, 2013). Municipal wireless internet as well as public and interactive displays to be used in public spaces are the subject of discussion as well. In the paper, “ubiquitous computing” is mentioned as one of the features of the smart city (Ylipulli, Suopajärvi, Ojala, et al., 2013). New urban squares are characterized by mobility (Frith, 2012). These electronic aspects may be the necessary revitalization factor for abandoned spaces in cities and villages. A new countryside, plant communities and public green spaces are the basic themes of the analysis of the rural Yangtze Delta region of China (Zhu, Liu, Qian, et al. 2013).

Another author deliberates on a new development experiment called “new urbanism” in South Africa, as expressed in the Melrose Arch in Johannesburg. Mixed-use street furniture, “pedestrian-friendly streetscapes” and “small town atmosphere” – it appears to be a reality version of a miniature of utopia, a place offering the kind of common space, which is missing in residential suburbs undergoing sprawl. This seems to be a cityscape and urban character of the revitalization roots associated with political change (Murray, 2013). The next

paper discusses the design and construction of public spaces. The historic sites of St. Petersburg in Russia are intended to be preserved and restored. The protection of cultural heritage is planned for historic districts – buildings and other structures. The creation of new squares and streets is shown as possibilities to develop the inner-city of the Russian town (Yaveyn, Yaveyn, Grigorev, 2013).

Information and communications technologies (ICTs) are novel tools designed to help make pedestrian areas attractive as part of a new trend in urbanism. Education, information, art, and entertainment are the main uses of information and communications technologies to be planned for public spaces. What is important is the challenge that these functions are mostly considered private. Examples include Saragossa's Digital Mile, the Cloud at Athens and the concept of Flux Space, as well as Romanian pedestrian spaces, which are already using ICT tools (Stadler, 2013). ICTs are described as a factor in a "cyber Renaissance". This present aspect of communication between people, as a sign of democracy, starts in the Greek agora in Athens in the simple form of physical human interactions and goes through squares in modern villages. In the post-modern urban fabric, the markets and public places are missing, as though not designed on purpose. The new public space in the 21st century (e.g. Italy and USA) may be created also by means of new technologies, which is a sign of the times. Moreover, the paper reminds us about the novelty elements on the political scene in Greece as "life among equals", which was like a mirror for the agora. We are missing these distinct urban patterns today. Can we replace them by new public places connected by technology? (Pavan, Lemme, 2011).

The reuse of blighted areas in densely populated urban areas as well as in the suburbs may be an economic mission of the largest and best financed business improvement districts (BIDs) in the United States. Examples of reuse include Manchester in England as well as New York and Boston in the United States, where new pedestrian paths had been created in an area of overloaded streets; Hartford, with a new elevated park located over a highway and railway lines; Arlington County in Virginia, with athletic fields called Long Bridge Park on the former site of a polychlorinated biphenyl-filled 18 acre brownfield, which lies under the flight path of Reagan National Airport. Another example of land reuse is that of a blighted waterfront in Wilmington, Delaware, reclaimed as a mixed-use site for culture, services, commerce, sports, riverside walk and recreation. The Anacostia River in Washington D.C. was also reclaimed from a virtually poisoned greenfield into a shore park. The consideration of new attractions in the form of parks in the suburbs is one proof of a shift in the economic goals of North America. In these cases, commerce, transportation, and manufacturing have dominated the region for a long time. So-called second-hand parks and squares are now seen as a key attraction – a magnet for people

living in low income communities. This problem applies to both urban and rural sites (Houston, 2012; Wilcox, 2014).

Commercial buildings have been developed in China since the 1980s using up public areas formerly home to parks, youth and senior centers, museums, and libraries. New squares and streets are often in a much worse condition than the old ones in core cities and surrounding areas in large metropolitan regions. Valuable old trees are cut down in order to get new empty space and benches and trees giving natural and humid shadow in the summer are missing. Increasing car traffic disturbs the peaceful atmosphere of residential avenues. The quality of the pavement and surrounding architecture is also poor in so-called “gated communities” in China. Unfriendly playgrounds, cold, wide, and concrete spaces, and chain restaurants appearing in places where a resting area for pedestrians shall be designed or occupying riversides by private houses – these and the before mentioned characteristic features of new public spaces can be recognized in Shanghai and Beijing (Miao, 2011). Additionally, in Beijing, Shanghai, and Xining in China, urban growth follows a pattern of post-reform modernization and hyper-urbanization. The product of these two processes includes new public spaces. Crucial is the development of the pedestrian realm and the five types of new public spaces, as analyzed in selected items in the literature, such as newly-open landscapes, squares, commercial spaces, green spaces, as well as transitional spaces. For China what is meaningful is the urban public space as defined in three periods of Chinese history: (1) prior to 1949, (2) post-1949 revolutionary China, and (3) post-modern reform China. At present, the shopping mall plays often the role of a street and squares infuse new life into former revolutionary spaces. The author provides examples of the transformation of market streets in Wangfujing, Beijing, and a neighborhood reused as a shopping mall (Xintiandi) in Shanghai, described as the city’s “living room”. The discussion in China concerns relevant issues such as parks, green development, and historical preservation. Nevertheless, the creation of ephemeral public spaces in transitional China is also observed in everyday life as well. The theme of the paper is “fewer walls, more malls” (Gaubatz, 2008).

The question of the revitalization of urban centers can be answered by forcing cars out of cities, recovering the beauty of historical buildings, and creating “new” streets and markets as social places destined for community integration and communication. In this case, the word “new” is meant as the reuse of vehicular roads and parking lots as pedestrian zones necessary for cleaning up the noisy, polluted, and uncomfortable, for people, inner cities. Here the basic components of these zones are concerned, such as their dimensions, greenery, street furniture, as well as overall design shaping the spatial environment in countries such as Lithuania (Jakovlevas-Mateckis, 2012).

The specific politics of New York include the regulation of the engagement of the private sector in making urban spaces of the city more accessible for public. A helpful feature is in this case the city's mechanism of gratifications, which functions since 1961. Important is also the city's zoning reform from the 1970s, which caused increased amenity creation along private streets and squares serving the public. The paper analyzes 123 privately-owned public spaces (POPS), of which 47 emerged before the reforms, and 76 were constructed after the reforms. One of aspects here is the measurement index of control or accessibility of the space. One of the results is the statement that the post-reform pedestrian areas motivate their use by new design elements and signs. Nevertheless, in comparison with the pre-reform spaces, the use is being reduced because of declining openness of the sites and a growing number of subjective principles and regulations. The mentioned reforms did not influence the functioning or social features of these places. It is important to encourage the increased creation of privately-owned public spaces and to use the law to regulate them (Schmidt, Nemeth, Botsford, 2011).

New public spaces are also treated as an open-air theater. On the public scene, there are actors playing their roles, and the audience. These are, for example, music concerts, plays, presentations of scientific research, trade fairs or games in the city markets, squares, and streets on a large and small scale. Visitors, inhabitants, and tourists enjoy such events (Geiger, 2012). Their enthusiasm is experienced in the photographs and videos made during these programs. The internet, television and radio are sources of public transmission, and videos, cameras, I-Pods, tablets and cell phones are just some of the possible means of recording the performances. Therefore, information, cultural, commercial, and social activities of people in public spaces are connected with the media and new technologies.

Today, public spaces are no longer necessary for traditional use, but rather for the social and psychological health of current inhabitants, which may be used to solve the problem of spatial revitalization. Historical markets and streets are transformed into pedestrian areas with a new image that is modern. Optimally designed squares and streets serve everyone and are sensitive to residents' needs and significant for the entire community. Their quality is also measurable (Mehta, 2014).

In some cities in Great Britain, the impact of density on various elements of sustainability is being examined. It has been concluded that in dense settlements, good access to services, poor availability of parks, a lack of safety, and fewer social interactions are likely to occur. These aspects are related to the features of public open spaces in such environments (Dempsey, Brown, Bramley, 2012). In Mersin, Turkey, well-organized public space is available despite the missing aspect of urban planning. However, dangerous in the landscape is the lack of harmony as well as a resignation from urban complexity and diversity while developing the city. Place-sensitive strategies and urban principles are

necessary in order to redefine urban planning needs and revitalize urban spaces. These are characteristic spatial changes in Mediterranean port cities, where streets and squares play a mostly social role of communication and commerce (Ünlü, 2013).

There is interesting research also from Iran. So-called walk-ability is a feature of public space, where continuity, human scale, and complexity are the most important aspects. In this case, gender characteristics are included, in that “complexity” is relevant for women, while a “human scale” is meaningful for men. These aspects play a significant role during walking in the public space in Hashtgerd New Town (Bahrainy, Khosravi, 2013).

In Turkey, flexible economic strategies are meaningful as far as the use of urban spaces is concerned. Squares and streets are places for retailers and consumers in the city of Ankara. The holistic retail plan is connected with the system of public spaces, which may be a good support pillar for the economy (Erkip, Kızılgün, Mungan Akinci, 2014). In this sense, street trade shall be connected with more resilient ways of economic stabilization (Kärrholm, Nylund, Prieto de la Fuente, 2014). Nevertheless, research in Tempe, Arizona (USA) shows that commercial urbanism is needed in order to make survival possible in periods of decline in the economy at the local level. This transition is a chance for spatial recovery after the present financial crisis, which affects also city planning itself. In Tempe, pedestrian areas are affected as well, enabling the linkage to business (Balsas, 2014).

One interesting aspect is the “mixed-use” sidewalk. Such public areas, in this case analyzed in Vietnam, may be, after appropriate adaptation and the use of modern design processes; an interesting solution for urban areas experiencing revitalization (Kim, 2012). Beachfronts are a specific type of public space. In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, these pedestrian areas in the urban environment are regulated as a sign of spatial revitalization (Godfrey, Arguinzoni, 2012).

Research in rapidly urbanizing cities in Latin America shows the significance of the use of green areas, especially at night, since they are larger and more charming than other kinds of public spaces in this region. Differences in access to safe parks in peri-urban zones depend on the gender and income of urban inhabitants. This manner of land use planning, including green areas, shows possibilities for urban revitalization by means of nature (Wright Wendel, Zarger, Mihelcic, 2012). Likewise, the recovery of cities may be realized stepwise via urban design projects. The case studies of the Kadıköy Old Market Area Revitalization Project and the Kartal Industrial Area Regeneration Project in Istanbul (Turkey) prove that such design is needed in the urban planning process. One of keys to success is the participation of local inhabitants (Firdin Özgür, 2013).

Neglected urban sites in North America are quite often cleaned up by volunteers. The motivation to develop such cleanup programs is economic development including the sale of

property and the creation of public spaces in brownfield areas (Wernstedt, Blackman, Lyon, Novak, 2013).

Last but not least is a 12-chapter publication analyzing the problem of revitalization of Polish and European cities (Great Britain, France, Germany). The main subject of analysis in 2009 was the management of urban areas in crisis, revitalization of cities, spatial aspects of regeneration (inner-city, block housing, post-industrial, railway worker housing, former military sites), demographics, social issues, as well as legal and organizational aspects of revitalization in cities in Poland, and financing and real estate management in the process of upgrading. In 2010, a number of books on the renewal of Polish cities, assumptions of revitalization policy in Poland, models of urban recovery, systems of revitalization monitoring, as well as examples of urban regeneration were published. This new research literature covers brownfield reclamation, which is crucial for street and square renovation and establishment in neglected urban areas previously used for other purposes (Guzik, 2009; Skalski, 2009; Bryx, Jadach-Sepiolo, 2009; Jarczewski, 2009; Zborowski, 2009; Rydzik, 2009, Bryx, 2009; Ziobrowski, Jarczewski, 2010; Ziobrowski, 2010; Janas, Jarczewski, Wańkowicz, 2010; Jarczewski, Jeżak, 2010; Muzioł-Węclawowicz, 2010).

Summary

On the one hand, in the presented world literature, many possibilities of treating open public spaces in large metropolitan areas, midsize cities, and the countryside can be observed. These new public places are meaningful for inhabitants, tourists, and employees of companies. Therefore, the function of squares and streets varies from workplace and business service area to recreational area. Positive changes and the development of a new public direction are seen in examples from the United States, Germany, England, France, Italy, Lithuania, Brazil, and South Africa. Pedestrian areas, independent of their owner (communal or private) are becoming a magnet for communities of all sizes. This phenomenon is even more interesting since these public spaces are being created in neglected areas in the urban realm. In this special case, the creation of new squares seems to be an optimal method for urban and rural revitalization.

On the other hand, the problem of urban blight is not being solved in many countries in Asia and North America. Cited case studies include Turkey, China, Latin America, and Central Europe including Poland. Here the difficulties result from the missing aspect of searching for the aesthetics of the city and for its new image. Another key obstacle in Poland is the lack of a tradition of spatial planning that would consider landscape value, footpaths, charming public spaces, landscape windows, remote views, visual breaks, and other usable public places. Such elements are not dealt with special care or regarded as legally binding in an urban planning sense or an opportunity to improve cities. Finally, countries as different as

Singapore and China are beginning to focus on developing pedestrian areas, which may be a positive signal for the world community to consider the importance of such urban areas.

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