

Smart growth and integrated planning in Gdansk and Dublin urban changes

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1 THEME

'Smart growth and integrated planning in urban changes of Dublin and Gdansk' is a complex issue. Its complexity emerges from various factors that need to be considered. First, the urbanisation process in such different cities should be analysed separately because of differences in the planning systems and the context of governance. The next problem to be taken into account is the nature of the process itself. The discernible characteristics of the particular stage of urban changes in every particular city should be carefully examined and explained.

Therefore, the first assumption was that there were some groups among cities that were similar in the character and stage of their urban changes (van den Berg 1982, Cheshire and Hay 1989, Cheshire 1995 and Champion 1995) and that this situation was common and applied to Gdansk as well. Gdansk is following a similar path of development as other European cities, although it can be at a different stage of its urban changes. Hence the objective of the first part of the research was to designate the relevant European city, adequate to be compared with Gdansk. A key difficulty here was to position Gdansk among the whole array of European cities due to the differences in advancement in their respective urban development. Finally, Dublin was chosen for the comparison.

As far as the research on European urban changes in cities is concerned, it should be noticed that it was recommended by the European Environmental Agency [6], which stated that 'new member states, where little urban sprawl has been detected, may follow the same path of urban development in the coming decade' and 'this is a role devolved to spatial development in policy making where the EU can support the envisioning of spatial planning of Europe's cities and regions to effectively address the issue of urban sprawl. This articulated vision of sustainable urban and regional development can provide the context for a range of integrated mutually reinforcing policy responses, offering a new policy coherence to be implemented at all levels.' EEA indicates that major contributions to combat urban sprawl include the transport and cohesion policies. However, the research proposition concerned smart growth and integrated planning as the potential contributor in the struggle against urban sprawl, because the policies can respond exactly to several factors (as shown in the Fig. 1), i.e. by raising living standard, the quality of life in the city, by focusing on the usage of public transport and by the participative character of decision making processes.

Needless to say, smart growth and integrated planning represent the characteristic way of modern planning spotlighting e.g. 'concentrated deconcentration' [4] or the vision of European 'eco-metropolis': high-tech, culturally in the swim, ecologically correct and receptive to participatory democracy, connected by an efficient transport system. All these refer in general to establishing the city development policy that allows different localities to develop their respective qualities as nodes in the polycentric network, inside or outside the European core (London – Paris- Milan – Munich – Hamburg or as it used to be called '20-40-50' because this area covered 20% of the territory of the EU at the end of 1990s and 40% of the UE population were producing 50% of its GDP [2].

The thesis was that although the suburbanisation occurred in certain circumstances (as shown in Fig. 1), it was possible to control and/or mitigate the process with smart growth strategy and integrative planning. It is presumed that smart growth and integrative planning have been applied in Dublin as well as in many other cities with positive results. The multi sectoral study of the comparative evaluation between Dublin and Gdansk [1] has designated the number of issues that can be regarded as the smart growth and integrative planning indicators. They have been selected in order to measure the results of the implementation of these policies in both cities. They refer in general to the accessibility, 'soft location factors' [3], the transport nodes and citizen participation and governance.



Fig. 1: Drivers of urban sprawl [6]

‘Smart growth and integrated planning in urban changes’ was aimed to test the effectiveness of smart growth and integrative planning implementation first and at the transparent evidence of applying the adequate policies’ necessity to control or mitigate the urban sprawl in Gdansk.

The results of the research can be the proposal to other cities that would be interested to test the effectiveness of smart growth and integrative planning implementation by comparative evaluation of the policies implementation.

2 REFERENCES

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