

DEVELOPMENT OF SPATIAL PLANNING IN POLAND ON REGIONAL AND COUNTRY-WIDE SCALE

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Poland, like Hungary and Czechoslovakia, is at present in a transitory period from the so-called socialist system to a, more or less controlled, market economy. During the previous period, decisions concerning the country's socio-economic-spatial development were made in the so-called "center" and were implemented through the order-and-allocate system. One of the instruments of this system was spatial planning, defined as, for instance, the location of large investment projects both in industry and other branches, e.g. the development of transport network and also the establishment of universities, cultural centers and broadly conceived housing.

Such decisions had an essential influence on the distribution of population and on the changes in the settlement system of the country and its regions.

At present we are, as mentioned above, in a transitory period. Plans of spatial organization on macro and meso scales have lost their function to date, and nowadays there is a discussion as to the future role of these plans. Personally, I am of the opinion that we still need a strategy of socio-economic-spatial development for Poland to join the rest of Europe. We also need a regional policy to define the main directions of regional development, which would account for the needs of the state as a whole and of its regions. Representatives of territorial self-governing bodies should take an active part in this process. This would concern first of all problems such as: border regions, economically backward regions (especially agricultural ones), regions requiring the restructuring of industry (e.g. Upper Silesia and Łódź), or regions of highly valued natural environment. Similarly, territories which are at present economically active, such as the agglomerations of Warsaw and Poznań where there is a spontaneous development of the private sector, also require a well thought-out spatial policy. This policy is needed to prevent spatial chaos which could hinder the future development of these areas, making it more difficult for the inhabitants living there, and leading to ecological threats (especially threats to the natural environment). There is an awareness of such a need in the developed countries of Europe as well, and in almost all of these countries there exists regional planning.

That is why I consider it proposeful to present the development and the state of spatial planning on macro and meso scales in Poland starting at the period before World War II and ending at the present time.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT UNTIL THE PRESENT

The pre-war period

The efforts to formulate a concept for spatial organization of the country have a relatively long tradition in Poland. However, it is not the purpose of this sketchy paper to present the problem as a whole, for this would require a separate, broader study.

The first of such full-fledged efforts was undertaken in the years 1936–1939 when, under the leadership of Vice Prime Minister Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, ambitious plans to accelerate economic development in Poland started to be implemented through the realization of large, 'large' to be understood on the scale of that time, industrial investment projects. These plans were connected, for instance, with the establishment of the so-called Central Industrial Region, located in principle at the confluence of the Rivers Vistula and San but encompassing, in fact, a much broader area (a part of the Lublin province and a part of the Kielce province). These significant investment projects required broadly conceived studies, accounting for their relations to technical infrastructure (especially transport and energy), labour resources, settlement network etc. This entailed the need to establish a special team of specialists devoted to the subject entirely, connecting the economic and the spatial approach. The need resulted in the creation of a special detachment within the Ministry of Finance, headed by S. Melessa, which elaborated the first planning studies covering the whole country.¹ It should be noted that simultaneously there was regional planning developing in Poland in the 1930s under the supervision of the Ministry of Home Affairs. On the basis of an order of its minister, ten areas were defined and legally established, for which regional plans were to be elaborated. In 1937 regional planning was encompassing some 50% of Polish territory.² The development of spatial planning on the scale of regions and of the whole country was interrupted in 1939 by the outbreak of the war.

The years 1946–1949

After World War II, on the basis of the decree of June 2nd, 1946, concerning the planned spatial organization of the country, the Main Office of Spatial Planning (GUPP) was established, and was affiliated with the Ministry of Reconstruction, directed by M. Kaczorowski. The main task of this Office was to elaborate the concept and the plan of spatial organization of the country. This plan was to define:

- (1) areas meant for agriculture, forestry, mining, industry, water economy, culture, education, health, recreation and for nature reserves;
- (2) distribution of population and the network of main urban centers with fundamentals of their development and functions determined;
- (3) the network of services in the domains of transport, communication and energy;

- (4) division of the country's area into regions, as a basis for the uniform administrative breakdown of the state.

Regional Planning Directorates, subordinate to the Main Office, co-operated with it.³ It is obvious that this broad and ambitious undertaking inevitably encountered serious difficulties resulting both from the lack of fundamental data and adequate human resources (there was a change of boundaries, research and data collection were interrupted by the war, and scarce human resources were dispersed by it) as well as from difficulties in determining the direction of future socio-economic development. The latter problems were within the scope of competence of the Central Planning Office (CUP) whose planning horizon was short, while spatial transformations are only conceivable in a longer time horizon. That is why it is in GUPP that interesting studies of the country-wide plan were elaborated, having more of the character of forecasting hypotheses and methodological value.

The period 1949–1970

After both GUPP and CUP had been dissolved in 1949, and the State Committee for Economic Planning had been established, spatial planning on a country-wide scale formally ceased to exist. It can be assumed, though, that the concept of distribution of productive forces contained by the Six-Year Plan (1949–1955), was, to some extent, founded on the studies and analyses of GUPP.⁴ This Six-Year Plan contained something like a substitute for the plan of spatial organization of the country. In the years 1955–1957, in the Association of Polish Town Planning (TUP) a lively discussion was started concerning the necessity of the revival of regional and country-wide spatial planning in connection with economic planning. In 1956, the Planning Commission at the Council of Ministers started to work on the long-term plan of national development including the program of spatial organization, while the elaboration of regional plans was handed over to voivodships (provinces). The law on spatial planning of January 31st, 1961 was ultimately the legal basis for spatial planning. This law considered the goal of spatial planning as: "ensuring adequate development for particular areas of the country". This goal was to be attained through "determination, for particular areas, of purposes and the manner of development of land meant for definite purposes, with due consideration of current and future needs, resulting from the socio-economic development program". Thus, spatial planning (both regional and country-wide) was closely connected with economic development planning and was, at that time, entirely within the scope of competence of the Planning Commission. Within this Commission, the Group of Long-Term Planning was established, and since 1966, this Group also contained the Team of Spatial Organization of the Country. The time horizon for the long-term ("perspective") plans was determined to be 15–20 years, while the so-called directional plan had the time horizon until the year 2000.⁵

The years 1971–1982

The socio-economic, and also political, crisis at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s brought as an effect the change in the governing group and, with them, new concepts of accelerated development of the country. It was namely held that, among other factors, the lack of long-term concepts of socio-economic-spatial development for Poland contributed to economic stagnation and, consequently, to numerous spatial conflicts. In connection with this, the Prime Minister issued the order of no.10 of January 24th, 1972, concerning the elaboration of the spatial organization plan of the country and the regional plans (unpublished). On the basis of this action, work on the design for the spatial organization plan for the country started with the aim of finishing it by June 30th, 1973.⁶ Together with this, work on the designs of three macroregional plans covering altogether some 40% of the country's surface, was to be finished by December 31st, 1973, along with the designs of regional plans, to be finished by May 15th, 1973. (17 regions of that time were constituted by 12 voivodships and 5 voivodships coupled with separate urban areas of voivodship status: Warsaw, Cracow, Łódź, Poznań and Wrocław)

In the issue no.85 of the Bulletin of the Committee for Spatial Organization of the Country, Polish Academy of Sciences (KPZK PAN) the design for the spatial organization plan for Poland until 1990 was published⁷, elaborated under the leadership of R. Grabowiecki. This plan was accepted by the Political Bureau of the Communist Party and by the Government's Presidium. Hence, as is noted by A. Pyszkowski in his analysis, for the first time in Poland, the system of large-space plans was elaborated encompassing a country-wide plan, plans of selected macroregions and regional plans.⁸ Still, this plan of spatial development was not presented for acceptance to the Polish Parliament (Sejm) and therefore did not turn into law. According to A. Pyszkowski this resulted, in particular, from the fact that a new administrative breakdown of the country was under preparation at that time. This new breakdown was effectively introduced in June 1975 and it demolished the whole system of socio-economic-spatial planning to date. To replace 22 voivodship units, corresponding to 17 regions, 49 new voivodships were created and poviats (counties) were abolished. In order to secure, to at least some extent, the capacity of co-ordination of voivodship development plans, in July 1975, eight regional planning branches of the Planning Commission, seated in respective regions, were established under the order no.24 of the Chairman of the Planning Commission. The task of these branches was to co-ordinate, to some degree, the study and planning work concerning the development of voivodships within the framework of the so-called development plans of macroregions, encompassing with their spatial stretch four to eight voivodships. Their other task was to transmit the contents of decisions resulting from the country-wide plan down to the voivodships encompassed by the co-ordination scope of a given branch. From a formal point of view, defined by the laws on spatial planning and on the administrative breakdown of the country, macroregions were institutions with competences and, in principle, legally undetermined.

The impending economic crisis and the lack of a concept for further development hampered work on the plan for the spatial organization of the country, and the events of the beginning of the 1980s were not advantageous for this work either.

After 1982

Enactment of new laws concerning:

- (1) socio-economic planning (of February 26th, 1982),
- (2) the system of local councils and territorial self-government (of July 20th, 1983), and
- (3) spatial planning (of July 12th, 1984)

formed the basis for resuscitation of long-term and "perspective" planning, and for spatial planning as well. Central authorities felt the need to undertake some kind of study work, too. This found its reflection in the order no.7 of the Chairman of the Planning Commission, dated February 23rd, 1983, which stimulated "analytic and study work as well as forecasts allowing to identify problems and conditions for the country's spatial policy and regional development".⁹ The outline for the prerequisites to the spatial organization plan of the country, developed under the leadership of A. Pyszkowski in the Group of Spatial Organization of the Country within the Planning Commission of the Council of Ministers, had initially a time perspective extending until 1995. After discussions, held e.g. at the plenary meeting of KPZK PAN on May 15th, 1986¹⁰, or in the State Council of Spatial Economy as well as at other consultations, the plan outline obtained the common time horizon of the year 2000, together with the outline for the socio-economic development and structural policy plan. Both of these documents, presented as separate volumes after they had been accepted by the Council of Ministers, were, according to the law enactment procedure, transmitted by Prime Minister Z. Messner to the Sejm of the Polish People's Republic.¹¹ Article 16.1 of the law on spatial planning stipulates that: "The design for the country plan is submitted by the Council of Ministers for consideration of the Sejm, along with the perspective plan of socio-economic development. Decision taken by the Sejm regarding country plan determines, in particular, goals and principles of the spatial policy of the state".

THE PRESENT

As is known, the designs of the end of 1988 were taken back from the Sejm and the new Parliament elected in 1989 did not consider them any more. On the basis of the fundamental prerequisites of the document concerning the spatial part of the country plan, a new version was elaborated, lacking the nature of a formal Country-Wide Plan but a "long-term concept of spatial organization of the country". This new version was accepted by the Council of Ministers on July 30th, 1990, and then widely disseminated in Autumn, 1990.¹² It should be emphasized that the new document contains a profound analysis of the state of organization of Polish space, an effort at defining the main (potential) directions of long-term development, as well as considerations of the threats to the solutions proposed. Attention was also paid to spatial connections of Poland within Europe, with regard to some selected aspects. In my opinion the presentation of these items is too modest. The document is composed of three parts:

"Spatial policy of the state"

Here, emphasis was placed upon conclusions from the diagnosis of the state of spatial economy and upon conclusions from forecasts concerning long-term socio-economic development. Great emphasis was placed upon the problems of natural environment. And thus, it was stated that the non-rational development to date resulted in the situation in which there are 27 areas of imminent ecological danger within the territory of Poland, occupying altogether 11% of the country's total surface but inhabited by 35% of the population. There are environmental threats especially dangerous for agriculture in the regions of Legnica and Głogów, Upper Silesia and Cracow, Tamobrzeg, the delta of the River Vistula (a part of the Żuławy area), the lower River Odra and the Sudety Mountains. On the other hand, the North-Eastern part of the country is constituted of areas which until now were little disturbed environmentally. That is why these areas were defined already in 1988 as the functional region "The Green Lungs of Poland". This functional region is composed of the following five voivodships at present: Białystok, Łomża, Olsztyn, Suwałki and Ostrołęka. A macroregional plan of spatial organization for "The Green Lungs of Poland" is under elaboration now.

The diagnosis presented implies also that within the territory of Poland there are ten so-called problem areas, three of which are connected with forest and agricultural economy. These areas are: Sudety, North-Eastern Poland (especially Białystok, Łomża, Suwałki, partly Biała Podlaska and Chełm voivodships), and the region of the potential intensification of the development of food economy (Zamość-Sandomierz). It is essential for studies concerning future development to have estimates on potential changes in numbers and distribution of population. It is assumed that by 2000 the whole population of Poland will have reached some 40 million, while rural population will have decreased slightly down to 14 million. There will be, on the other hand, essential transformations in the occupational structure in the countryside (a decrease in the employment in agriculture, an increase in the employment in services, especially in rural and agricultural services). It is difficult to say whether this will be so. For the important increase in unemployment, which is envisaged at present, mainly in industry and construction, might slow down the pace of structural transformations in agriculture and in occupational structures of the rural population.

"Resources and directions of spatial organization in the country"

In the author's opinion, the most important questions here are taken up in point 2.3, Food economy, and presented in Map no.9. Paragraph 100 (p.75) states that "The analyses conducted indicate that the greatest effects regarding the increase in agricultural production could occur in the areas of: Greater Poland and Cuiavia where the level of technical equipment and agricultural tradition create the capacities for significant production growth under the condition of improvement in water supply for agriculture and for rural settlements (...), Zamość-Sandomierz region, a large area of the best soils in Poland,

whose productive utilization is still relatively low due to shortcomings in the equipment of rural areas with technical and social infrastructure facilities (...)."

Paragraph 105 turns the attention towards the fragmentation of agricultural land in the farms of South-Eastern Poland: "It is expected that in the South-Eastern part of the country, characterized by particularly high fragmentation of farmland, the domination of bi-occupational farms will persist."

Still, the "long-term concept..." did not envisage such a rapid growth of unemployment in this region, which could cause it to become, as well, a problem area of the spatial economy in the not too distant future.

"Problems in the implementation of concepts for the spatial organization of the country"

In view of far reaching changes in the structure of authorities and the expected further transformations, this part of the document commented upon has partly gone out of date. It is, though, certainly still valid to monitor changes in the spatial organization of the country and to postulate further research, especially in the quickly changing socio-economic situation of Poland. Point 3 of this part of the document considered refers to threats against the implementation of the spatial organization plan of the country and presents synthetically these threats in Map no.16. This map implies that:

- (1) there may appear a wide area threatened by socio-economic depression, a broad belt stretching from the Eastern boundary of Poland through Białystok-Łomża-Ostrołęka voivodships (areas dominated by private farming, mainly on weak soils);
- (2) there is a possibility of imminent threat towards agricultural land, even down to the outward elimination of these areas from agricultural use, due to shortcomings in infrastructural equipment, regarding mainly Żuławy in the delta of the River Vistula, the area of rich soils (more than 80 points on the average on the Polish 100-point scale);
- (3) there is a possibility of the appearance of two large areas of cumulation and compounding of threats" concerning the Lower Silesian region and the Upper Silesian-Cracovian region (from Opole in the West to Cracow and its vicinity). In particular, in the region of Lower Silesia this area of cumulation and growth of threats" would encompass part of an area with very good soils called the Lower Silesian Plate.

NOTES

- ¹ See e.g. MALISZ, B. 1983: *Przekształcenie przestrzennej struktury zagospodarowania Polski. Koncepcja-praktyka-rezultaty* (Transformation of the spatial structure of development of Poland. Concepts-practice -results) — In: *Planowanie Przestrzenne* — PWE, Warszawa — pp.206-207.
- ² MRZYGLÓD, T. 1958: *Planowanie Regionalne* (Regional Planning) — PWE, Warszawa — p.35.
- ³ See MALISZ, B. op. cit. p.208.
- ⁴ ZAWADZKI, ST. M. 1969: *Podstawy planowania regionalnego* (Foundations of regional planning) — PWE, Warszawa — p.208.
- ⁵ After ZAWADZKI, ST. M. op. cit. pp.35-37. and 42-43.
- ⁶ PYSZKOWSKI, A. 1987: *Planowanie w układach regionalnych w Polsce* (Planning in the regional setting in Poland) — *Biuletyn KPZK PAN*, 132 — Warszawa — pp.57-59.
- ⁷ *Plan przestrzennego zagospodarowania kraju do 1990 roku* (Plan of spatial organization of the country until 1990) — *Biuletyn KPZK PAN*, 85 — Warszawa, 1974
- ⁸ PYSZKOWSKI, A. op. cit. pp.82-84.
- ⁹ *Założenia planu perspektywicznego zagospodarowania kraju do 1995. Projekt* (Prerequisites for the perspective plan of country's development until 1995. Draft) — *Komisja Planowania przy RW* — Warszawa, October 1985 — p.5.
- ¹⁰ *Założenia planu przestrzennego zagospodarowania kraju* (Prerequisites for the spatial organization plan of the country) — *Biuletyn KPZK PAN*, 136 — Warszawa, 1987
This publication presents prerequisites to the plan, results of consultations and discussions.
- ¹¹ *Plan perspektywiczny do 2000 r. Część I: Rozwój społeczno-gospodarczy i polityka strukturalna, i Część II: Przestrzenne zagospodarowanie kraju* (Perspective plan until 2000. Part I: Socio-economic development and structural policy, and Part II: Spatial organization of the country) — *Planning Commission at the Council of Ministers* — Warszawa, September 1988 — (outline)
- ¹² *Długookresowa koncepcja przestrzennego zagospodarowania kraju* (Long-term concept of spatial organization of the country) — CUP — Warszawa, September 1990 — (some 130 pp., tables and 17 maps)