ID 1334 | PLANNING IN POST-COMMUNIST CITY: BY FLEXIBLE PLANNING TO NATURAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

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1 AGE AND STABILITY OF STRUCTURES

A city which has been through a long historical development and continuity in its planning resembles a naturally growing primeval forest in which it is possible to find and well distinguish old, solid and stable structures from those young ones which are still looking for their place in the world (Hrůza 2014).

The basic genetic code of all cities without distinction, much the same as the double-helix of DNA made up of combinations of 4 elements is typical of all that lives on the Earth, is a concentration process. Gravity, all the attractive forces, attractiveness, catchment and commuting, but also human desire and human interest are just different names for the same fundamental process inscribed in the innermost nature of our world (Clegg 2012, Hudeček 2010, Hudeček et al. 2011). And, on the other hand, the opposite of concentration - "thinning" in the sphere of the universe of expansion and cooling, in the places of prevailing gravity and curvature of space-time, as a result of the course of time the common duration in hours, days, years or even millennia. Two opposites, but at the same time eternal companions are the cause of all diversity as well as, on the other hand, the cause of the interesting similarity in the reality of the existing structures Chardin 2003, Veverka 2013).

From the mutual and never-ending tug of war between the two basic directions of development – concentration, thus from chaos to order by means of self-organization in the presence of coincidence (in social systems then through the expression of free will) and thinning, i.e. development from order to chaos and growing entropy – operating at the same time on various scale levels in our reality emerge all the structures that we are, after all, even as people able to perceive (Prigogin 1997, Wolfram 2002). Those, in the direction of development all the way to us, in our corner of the developmental fractal, gain on simplicity that also we are able to understand and pass on – straight streets, clean lines of houses, refrigerators or cars. The existence of fundamental physical constants, energy and matter, of carbonaceous living matter on the planet Earth, subsequently of man and his consciousness, these all are structures on whose existence cities stand as well, and without which no city would exist.

The key feature of from the eternal conflict of order and chaos emerging structures is their durability and stability. Each new structure is unstabilized and very unstable. Each old structure which on the day of observation still exists is, on the contrary, stable and stabilized. Structures become stable only by their subsequent existence, by their linking with existing structures and mainly by means of new, younger structures standing on their shoulders. Exposed topsoil is easy to slide, while soil covered with grass will survive even great natural disasters. Eeach new structure takes its roots in old structures, slightly upsets them but, at the same time, strengthens them.

These days, chaologists and especially catastrophologists swell with pride over their "predictions" of approaching revolutions and more or less great ends of our days (e.g. Tainter 1988). Partly justifiably because even each system of mutually interconnected structures built one upon the other will once sketch in its developmental fractal, economies of scale will find their limit and will meet with losses of scale. In these moments self-organization will reach its critical gradient (Bac et al. 1987) and, subsequently, the entire cascade of structures built one upon the other will collapse like a house of cards. Visions like that humankind also needs a bit (Harari 2011) because only our awareness of black swans (Taleb 2007) can prepare us for these events at least a little bit. And that their number will grow is not, as a result of human existence these days really all over the Earth, anything else but a proof of such a depicting of the developmental fractal. On the other hand, even though in the history of the development of e.g. animal species on the Earth, such great changes – the mass extinction of species – have already happened at least six times and in the history of the development of the concentration of population in settlements as well, we do not have, as people living on average about 80 or 85 years, many other options than to keep trying to solve the emerging problems and to create new structures. Not to allow the direction of

development from order to chaos, ubiquitous due to the ordinary flow of time measured by our clocks, is an eternal motivation for humankind.

2 STRUCTURES IN THE CITY – THE ASPECT OF SPACE

If we want to devote our attention to cities, their planning, management, and decision-making regarding their further development, we must be able to orient ourselves in the tangle in the history constructed and, above all, in up to now surviving structures (e.g. Hampl 2000, Jacobs 1970, or Hayek 1986). A certain selection of the basic direction of examination is needed – for example, the level of spatial localization of cities. From this point of view, the physical-geographical, i.e. terrain conditions are the oldest structure. Those precede or can be even one of the causes of the idea of the original inhabitants to settle down, again as a result of a conflict between concentration and thinning, an effort of people, in a larger number, to defend themselves against the outside environment over time (= thinning, cooling). However, that does not mean that there is only one single recipe, the only most suitable old structure that would guarantee to the city thousand years of existence and its harmonious development. Fertile soil, coast, good conditions for defense, suitable climate bound to the angle of slopes and many other factors are, from the viewpoint of currently existing cities, ancient structures, which could have played different roles at different times. In the years full of conflicts, fertility of the place, and therefore an easy way to earn one's living of local inhabitants, as a primary structure, did not have to be sufficient for the city to stand the competitive struggle with other cities. History is written only by survivors, and although we know much more about the past than decades ago, archaeologists are still able to find cities even larger and earlier than ancient Rome and by their inner structure cities even more primitive and in a way even stranger than we could even imagine a century ago.

The sixth layer of the more than 9000 year-old Turkish city Çatal Hüyük uncovered by archaeologists has no streets (Melaart 1967). Habitations composed of a system of dwellings dug into the ground lacked a good separation of the private from the public (Figure 1). The delimitation of the moments of shared time and private time, fundamental attribute of human life, an old bio-psychological structure, had to be reflected also in the nature of the city. Therefore apart from this so far rare historical exception, we have only to do with cities made up of streets, squares and houses and therefore it is possible to compare cities in accordance with their ground plans, shapes of streets and public spaces.

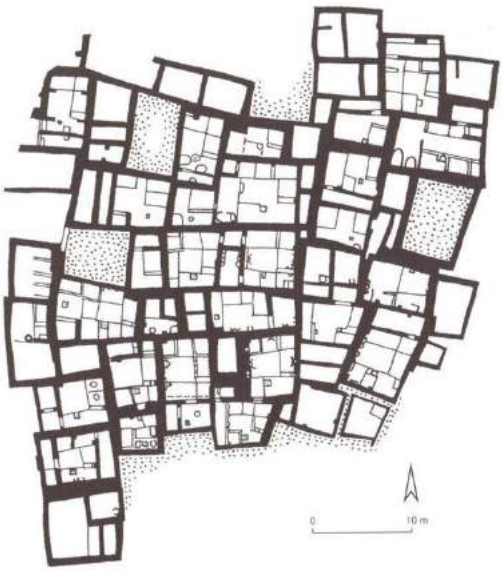

Figure 1 – Çatal Hüyük
Source: Hrůza 2014

The organically grown nuclei of historical cities and their intertwined and crooked network of streets and public spaces had been gaining their contours precisely according to the needs of the time, the demand for other crafts and activities that were missing in a small town at that time (Figure 2). By exceeding a certain level of wealth, each such city paid planners, and that is how a street grid came into existence, in fact the basic structure of the city. Sometimes simpler and altogether regular, sometimes more complex. Later founded cities, like virtually almost all cities in the New World, often start with this grid. Too great wealth of some of the most important centers of world empires led to the fact that these cities decided to rebuild their own nuclei in the historical Renaissance and Enlightenment eras. The industrial revolution provoked a similar pressure on the existing spatial structure of cities, which then resulted in the formation of the movement of preservationists.

Save for exceptions, in the existing cities their original structure has remained in existence even for thousands of years. Even major disasters like citywide fires, droughts, floods, or epidemics of diseases, which were always followed with an instruction in the form of new building regulations, better and more resistant infrastructure equipment and hygiene standards, rarely led to the reconstruction of the city grid. And even in situations more than appropriate for the overall transformation – for example, in the by the war heavily damaged London or totally destroyed Dresden – restoration of the original ground plan of the city eventually took place in quite a satisfactory degree. These cities, even despite the historic opportunity, chose the resuscitation of their former appearance. Nowadays, due to the large thinning in time (settling and consolidation of structures) neither city planners nor the majority of decision-makers have the strength and energy to rebuild cities. It is like when cooling (thinning) creates little crystals of solid matter in the fluid binding to themselves more and more substance until, gradually, all of the liquid solidifies.

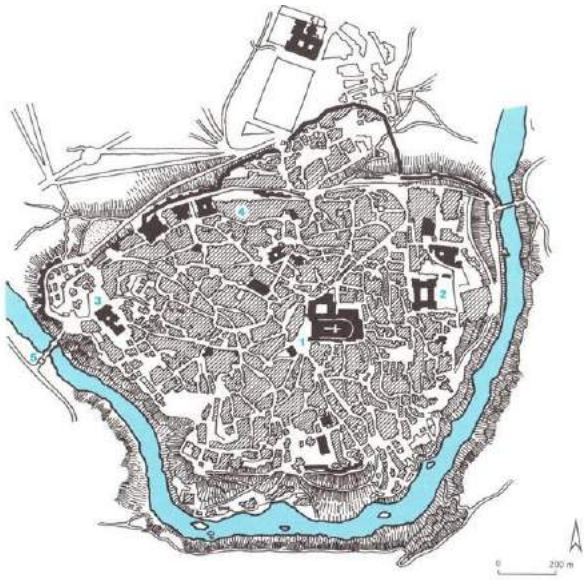

Figure 2 – Toledo
Source: Hrůza 2014

From the thousand years of existence, save for exceptions of the enormous stability of the city grid, we can proceed to the interior of the individual parts of this grid – to the blocks of houses filling the space between the public spaces of streets and squares. From the photographs of the historical center of, for example, Prague from the end of the 18th and 19th centuries, it is possible to make out that houses in the historical center grew a little taller, at the average by two floors (Bárta et al. 2006). However, not every city at that time led such a discussion on the preservation of its historical values, and immediately beyond the border of the historical core there was a similar situation as in other centers of the then world events. Factories and workers' quarters were growing and with the invention of the elevator also high-rise administrative and other buildings. The key to unraveling the durability of an already constructed building or block is to know the speeds and frequencies of changes at that time, especially the frequency of technological inventions, the development of quality of building materials and other factors. The character of the built-up area, the height of buildings, the appearance and exterior facade, the shape of the roof and other characteristics do not survive, save for exceptions, for thousands of years. In a sufficiently stabilized area, blocks of houses remain if not absolutely identical, then at least very similar even after many decades. Therefore, an appropriate time measure of the stability of this structure seems to be hundreds of years.

The interior of houses and apartments, the functional use of the floor area are subject to ever faster changes. The idea to establish a company and to start a business on some type of a digital device is now possible in one's apartment overnight. The times when industry or administration by their negative externalities drove people out far from factories and work for long periods of time, and thus fixed the internal functions of apartments and houses in the three categories set by the Athens Charter – housing, work, recreation – are already gone (e.g. Koolhaas 2014). A city of short distances, mixed types of functional use disrupting the typical transport scheme – in the morning, everybody in one direction and in the afternoon in the opposite direction, livable or, even more modernly, lovable projects of new neighborhoods that contain both real living – housing and preferably even recreation and work, these all are, among other things, consequences of the ever-accelerating and more unstable time into which our human society has entered. Change is becoming a common part of our life and consequences of each such change are, much the same as new structures, looking for their space in older structures. They grow through them with their roots, disrupt them, transform them partially according to their own need, and thus strengthen and confirm their existence in the future.

3 PLANNING, MANAGEMENT AND DECISION-MAKING REGARDING FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY

A plan is nothing else but regulation, control over the future. If I plan a meeting for the evening, I have refused, regulated, all other possibilities of spending the evening time. And including those possibly good and better than the arranged meeting could be. If in the meantime I thoroughly connect the meeting with other meetings or, for instance, with a place, changing it will become very difficult for me. I have exchanged flexibility and a possibility of a different choice for the expected benefit from the meeting.

I can “provide” planning – to create a plan – for a short period of time, or longer. In short-term planning – for example, if I intend to abstain from eating meat tomorrow – it is easy for my inner energy to overpower my long-standing habit of eating meat. However, in a long-term planning, after a certain period of time, our effort to achieve a slim figure, which we have resolved, for instance, on New Year's Day, slacks off, namely due to the effect and influence of strong, older and more stable structures (for example, "when I see food, I lose my self-control and I eat it"). In a medium-term planning, both the influences are then mixed in an extreme and impenetrable complexity.

However, is getting on long-standing, stable structures that like railway lines lead around us from a distant past to the far future, still planning? And what about that above-mentioned short-term effort to surpass oneself? Thus, is not the right planning rather the identification of those old structures worth caring for, which have been proven and have been carrying their fruit for years? Preserve them and thoroughly consider possible minor changes to each of them? Therefore, is not that, when managing the city in its entire complexity, rather about the management or, even better, about the decision-making on the basis of these old structures, and that based on a certain change of state in the surrounding, usually the local environment?

In our head, the above-mentioned planning is happening subconsciously and automatically when planning our own time. Our subconscious mind chooses, based on our experience, which is nothing else but old stabilized structures, what is good for us and known to us. In the form of emotions, "I want – I do not want", it subsequently informs our consciousness about the intention to, for example, reach out for pears or apricots on the table (e.g. Kahneman 2011, Lehrer 2009) . Our neurons, but also all the cells in our body, by means of mutual arguments, interconnections and power alliances by a complicated yet for us a subconscious way, make their way to the suggestion of a solution which naturally comes to our mind.

In planning evolutionary higher and further complexes, such as cities, the same process takes place among all people and more intensely among the involved participants in the city development – interested persons, companies, nonprofit organizations, etc. Thus, planning, as the initiation part of the whole process, in which the citywide emotion "I want" shows itself, does not make sense without a final goal. However, this final goal, if possible, should never be achieved. To plan without a plan at its end, on the other hand, does not quite make sense. The substitutes found so far and the solution to this "planning paradox" of the type of a continuous updating of the plan seems quite artificial in this respect.

Planning without a final creation of a plan people call a mistake but this is probably the only option we have and we have to reconcile with that for the future. Thus, it is much more about the process of planning itself than about the resulting plan, even though, as apparent from the above-written, it is at least appropriate to plot certain space-based structures on the map. That such a map is subsequently called a plan is just a matter of a perhaps a bit unfortunate agreement.

This all is a bit related to the partialization of planning as a type of activity. If, for example, in a city a few of its oldest structures are history (culture), associated with the thinking of in the city living and in the city concentrated people, then, as we have said, undoubtedly also natural conditions, but also the, on a long-term basis stabilized, structure of the street development, then the separation of city planning from other types of planning does not make any sense at all. From the spatial arrangement, the history and culture of the city unfolds, and vice versa. Even the common terms themselves – land-use and strategic planning – make the situation and its understanding quite difficult in this respect. Is not the word strategy a synonym for a plan, and is not then strategic planning just an empty collocation saying "planning planning"? Would not it be better to think of city planning rather from the viewpoint of more logical words of planning – pertaining to space and time? Or perhaps even better to space-time. Is not one planning face to face with

the above-said more than enough, and is not, after all, a land-use / spatial plan, enriched with long-term framework priorities, what should the current strategic plan be?

4 INTERRUPTED CONTINUITY AND CURRENT SITUATION IN A POSTCOMMUNIST CITY IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

In Eastern European and Central European countries, with the socialist past, the issues described above are very clear. Due to the long-term influence of the totalitarian regime, in the Czech Republic, for example, 40 years of communist central directive planning, we cannot even speak of any continuum of old structures. Moreover, looking further into the past, the Czech Republic and other states before World War I were incorporated into the Austro-Hungarian Empire where they played a non-dominant role. Thus, unlike the centers of the monarchy – Vienna and Budapest – in Prague, save for exceptions, reconstruction of the central part of the city essentially did not take place. When we are looking for continuity from the present perspective, this can also play a positive role, which is completely in compliance with the developmental theory of systems and the role of a gauge in relation to order or chaos.

Therefore, if we stay, for the reason of both topicality and especially simplicity, only in the second half of the 20th century, it was the absence of private property and private business which played the title role in the development of cities and their planning. Thus, any form or even only a hint of "bottom-up" planning has become virtually unthinkable, and it is not surprising that through the Velvet Revolution the Czech Republic has entered a period when planning and a plan (those notions were not differentiated too much and are not differentiated up to now) are in essence considered to be dirty words.

It did not take long for the results to show because the rapid and unrestrained development of investment activity on the one hand, and, at the same time, the more and more awakening civil society on the other hand, could not exist parallelly, side by side, for a long period of time. The ambivalence of society, rapid oscillations of the social pendulum, the alternation of the "from one extreme to the other" critical states had to be subsequently reflected also in city planning in the form of the re-emergence of a certain analogy of the extreme centralization of decision-making. Land-use plans of villages and towns in the Czech Republic have been, roughly since the turn of the millennium, again formed in the directive way with an extreme emphasis on the strong, in particular functional regulation. Thus, land-use plans of Czech municipalities, instead of the initiating role in the development of the territory, determine what in each small piece of the given territory must be – instead of what in the given territory can be. Instead of limits of utilization of the territory from the viewpoint of the capacity of the environment, infrastructure, population density and movements throughout the day, a certain parallel to the communist-style decision-making on the territory was agreed upon, which was based on the obligatory use of the territory determined by the planner, and which was from the viewpoint of the then social development logical, yet very inappropriate for the whole society and especially for the cities.

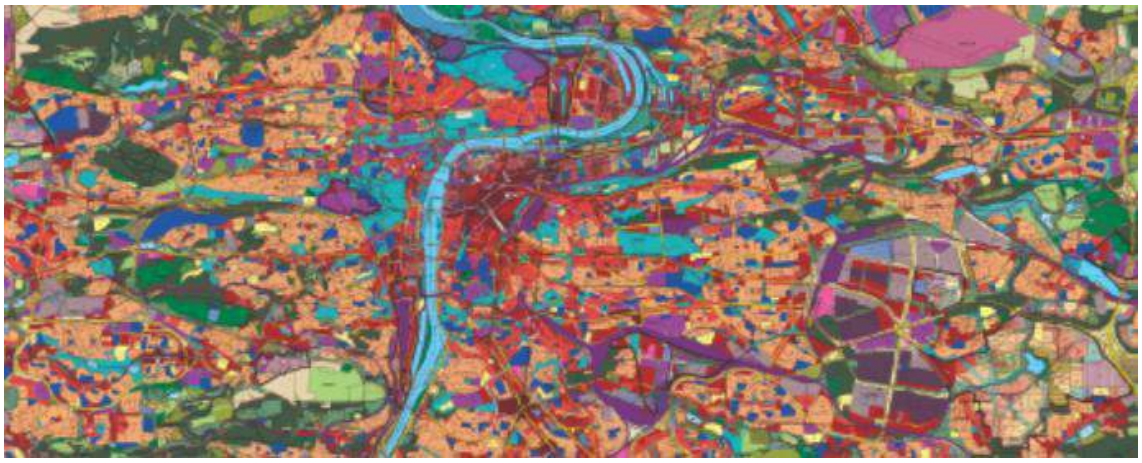

Figure 3 – A part of the present land-use plan of the City of Prague
Source: Koucký et al. 2014

In the present land-use plan of the Capital City of Prague (Figure 3) , there are more than 50 such types of the use of the territory and it is totally understandable that, in the long run, such a plan cannot succeed face to face with the ever-accelerating time generating new and new demands. During the first ten years of its existence (2000- 2010), this plan has been changed by the institute of the so-called changes of the land-use plan more than 3,000 times, which means roughly at a rate of 1 change per day. The city administration can carry out such a change to the land-use plan based on a request from owners or developers. These days, this process in the complicated legislation in the Czech Republic takes usually 2-4 years. In extreme cases, it can take even 7 or 10 years. Therefore, in the course of time, investments and development projects have completely stopped and these days, the capital of the Czech Republic, which has more than a million of inhabitants, is struggling with a lack of apartments and houses, a rocket rise in the prices of properties as well as rents, extreme suburbanization and urban sprawl in the wide surroundings, overloaded transportation, technical and social infrastructure. All this due to rigid and inflexible planning and an obvious lack of respect for older, stable and stabilized structures.

5 A LESSON FROM DEVELOPMENT AND OVERCOMING OF DISCONTINUITIES

As natural both in nature and in society, we perceive that which is sufficiently stabilized. By our biological nature, we are not and we don´t want to be reconciled to the fact that change is natural. But not equality, but hierarchy; not uniformity, but difference or self-resemblance are the fundamental characteristics of the world around us. Thus, to find the natural features in the development of the city, that which we could pick up the threads of by our further decisions, it is necessary to thoroughly focus on inequality and irregularities. To look for regularities in irregularities. While in a city that has been developing naturally over a long period of time, such as London, Vienna and many others, hierarchies and inequalities are long-established, and hence obvious, cities affected by the central directive planning are far from that.

The communist panel housing estates as a solution designed to solve the lack of apartments for the growing population and implemented by the national planning authority in the period between 1960 and 1990, then after the Velvet Revolution massive suburban construction of the so-called Business Baroque as a result of demand of people for their own houses dampened by communism for a long period of time, later, around the turn of the millennium, the rising fear of the continuation of uncontrollable growth without rules and, finally, the cessation of virtually any kind of construction nowadays – these all are only consequences and sediments of unstable structures on the surface of development. These are not deep, developmental and stable structures. These are essentially erroneous decisions and dead ends of development, which have to be partly inscribed into the overall development as historical epochs, too. However, with regard to the above-written, it is possible and also necessary to overcome them in the further decision-making about the development of the city. To incorporate their existence sensitively into the overall shape of the city.

In the city of Prague in 2012 development hierarchies were sought first. An unprecedentedly extensive and detailed field survey was conducted which focused on every detail of both public spaces and all urban buildings. All address locations, houses and buildings, numbers of floors, roof shapes, dimensions of roads, parks, technical networks and all other buildings in the city were mapped.

Therefore, it was possible to proceed to the mapping and consistent division of all urban structures according to their hierarchy. Fractal distribution of communications according to their importance, capacity and width, hierarchy of parks and recreational, residential and administrative sites were defined. The city was divided into about 800 historical sites, inside of which there are natural hierarchies again. On the map of the city, white and brown spots were identified – the so-called urban jungles – as priority areas for further construction and investment. Those were hierarchized and prioritized based on the multifactor analysis. The cultural history of the city, tourism, inspirational environment were identified in the hierarchy of importance of structures as key for the city, and possibilities for their further development or partial transformation were determined.

Apart from the spatial aspect of the city development, more than 1,500 experts, urban planners, geographers, architects, economists, as well as philosophers, theologians, lawyers, doctors, teachers, and many other representatives of professional chambers, as well as representatives of civic associations and major business corporations participated in more than 200 round table discussions and conferences with the aim to aggregate additional – even soft – data.

Subsequently, new building regulations, a new strategic plan, a new public spaces manual, a new document dealing with the development of the banks and the littoral areas of the Vltava River were created (Figure 4). And, of course, a creation of new city land-use plan was started (Hudeček et al. 2016, Koucký et al. 2014). The Institute of Planning and Development was established with an annual budget of over 15 million Euros and about 200 employees – as an organization able to face the complexity of the city and the creation of a new flexible land-use plan was initiated.

Figure 4 – Strategic and concept documents of the Institute of Planning and Development of Prague
Source: Institute of planning and Development

Thanks to this data collection, their aggregation and analysis, it was possible to approach all that happened in Prague in the past, even though the tendencies of these events were often contradictory, from the viewpoint – as I have suggested above – of a deeper perspective of long-term development structures. With its certain small part all that is past and has already been realized participates and will participate in the whole in the future. Duration in time (= thinning) gradually abrades the sharp edges of from the present view often illogical decisions and it was necessary to proceed on the basis of the deeper nature of the development of the city. The key characteristics of this process of ours were, and in the future also have to be, two fundamental courses: flexibility (of plans) and resilience (of newly built structures).

5.1 FLEXIBILITY OF THE PLAN AS A SOLUTION FOR OVERCOMING DISCONTINUITIES OF DEVELOPMENT

First of all, on flexibility as an essential feature of urban planning. The historical experience of a country which has been through extreme changes in the directions of development in the past and, unfortunately, still in the present is, in the case of the Czech Republic, obvious: Impossibility and blockage of change (due to, for example, totalitarian directive planning) sooner or later will necessitate a change of the whole system. The possibility of a change is a fundamental, the most substantial and a very deep structure, arising directly from the fundamental conflict of order and chaos in our reality.

From the viewpoint of flexibility of planning and of the plan (for example, a land-use plan), there must be a reasonable amount of order and chaos, i.e. the degree of regulation corresponding to the given place at a given time in the city (Figure 5). Thus, the new prepared city land-use plan of Prague divides the territory, among other things, also in accordance with their stabilization into 4 basic types:

- Protected preservation area
- Stabilized areas of existing buildings
- Transformation areas within the boundaries of the city and existing buildings
- Development areas outside the city boundaries and existing developments.

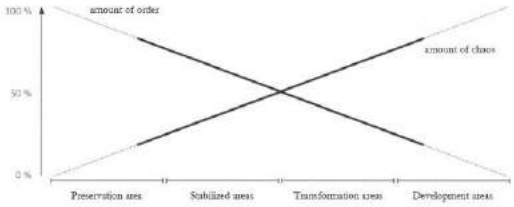

Figure 5 – Flexibility and stability – four degrees of regulation
Source: Koucký et al. 2014

The preservation area, in Prague moreover under the patronage of UNESCO, certainly does not allow much flexibility. Neither do stabilized areas with utilized high-quality buildings. Transformation territories, the above-mentioned city jungles – in the plan these need flexibility for dealing with investors very much. And, finally, the development areas, i.e. new premises for construction, apart from the areas built-up nowadays, except for general needs of the city, should be open to various other variants of development as much as possible. In practice, this different regulation means that these particular types of areas are in the city plan subject to a variety of directions or, in other words, to regulation of various intensity and limits of utilization and transformation of the territory.

Flexibility in the case of urban spatial planning means, for example, limits of utilization of the territory from the viewpoint of transportation, instead of a directive functional delimitation of what the territory must contain. In the case of the long-term intentions of the city, thus a kind of contemporary analogy to the strategic plan, flexibility then means the possibility of a slight stepping aside of development trends and a possible rapid adaptation to new trends.

Or, flexibility can also mean the greatest possible individualization and localization of the solutions of intentions of the development, with the existence of only a few important citywide framework rules. Hygienic limits, noise, limits of infrastructure, hierarchized street network, maximum height of buildings, or, for example, the need for social housing, these all are frameworks on whose foundation the current existence of the city stands. When negotiating individual projects among investors, cities and other participants, these can be discussed directly, over a common map, and there is no need to supplement them further with any other directives such as the aforementioned future functional uses.

It seems, that we are probably in a situation where, any minute now, only a common map and a few rules will be called a land-use plan – see the frames outlined above – which will be written down on a few pages of a supplementary handbook for city negotiators and approvers of projects. And perhaps the time is not far when even the words "limit" and "directive" will not be the right ones and the notion of information and informative, in the interlinked society, will be playing the same role in ensuring a rational development of cities in society built on the basis of democratic mechanisms. Especially at a time when we do not have the slightest idea of many future professions that will occupy a significant percentage of the population already in the following 10 or 15 years.

5.2 RESILIENCE OF NEW STRUCTURES

And now on the resilience of structures. Already from the introduction we know that an old and still existing structure is stable and a new structure is always unstable. But how can a city planner, hand in hand with a decision-maker, know that the new structures promoted by them will become stable in the future? That they will survive and endure the subsequent thinning over time and that they will succeed in competition with other structures? That, in consideration of the main purpose of work for the public sector – continuity of development – they will last longer than one electoral term or work period?

Resilience of structures needs to be estimated from structures from the past and trends in other, similar cities. For example, if a city center is filled with cars, we already know that walking is an older structure than driving a car, a given part of the city was built still at the time when there were no cars, only narrow roads for pedestrians, then preventing car access will undoubtedly be a stable structure in the future. Or, if in the vicinity of some brownfield there is a stabilized built-up area, which contains a complete hierarchy of public spaces, streets, parks and other, for example, social amenities, then it is possible, in this neighboring brownfield, to plan a distinct neighborhood only with respect to, for instance, the capacity of the surrounding transport infrastructure. However, if in the surrounding hierarchies there is some other significant deficit (Figure 6), the development of a new nearby area should primarily fill in these "holes". If this approach is violated, it will be subsequently necessary to bend and change the result of the bad decisions again and the instability of these and all the following structures will be immense.

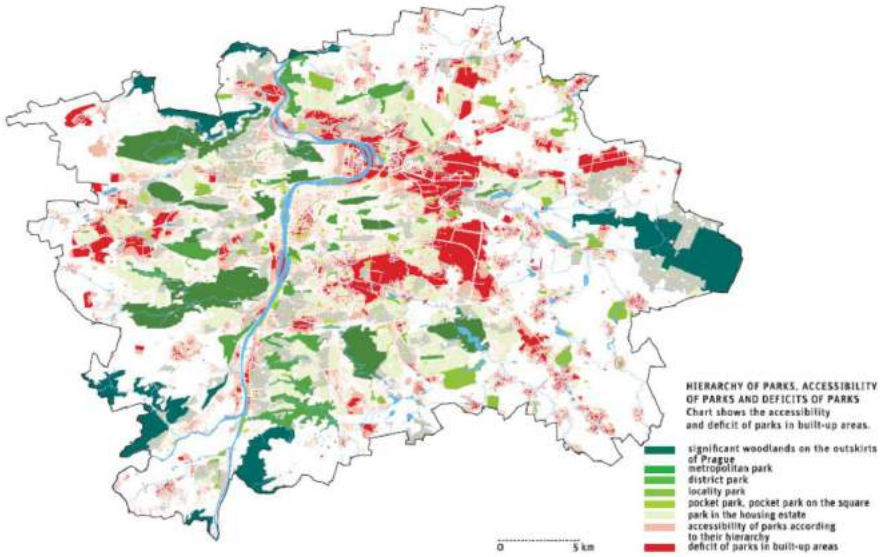

Figure 6 – Deficits of parks in the City of Prague
Source: Hudeček et al. 2016

What is also essential for the creation of stable structures is the fact that the oldest process in reality – concentration – will unstoppably continue until we reach a situation in which either we all end up in driving distance of one hour or we will be similarly close to each other, yet within walking distance. Humankind will seek and favor rather the other way of realizing concentration because we do not want to destroy the environment with extreme transportation. Extreme regulation, which is currently being implemented in the Czech Republic – and as a consequence of which even the number of new apartments required by a normal reproduction of population in the city (Prague) will not, after all, be built – does not seem to be a too resilient structure for the future.

Of course, it is possible to perceive resilience also as the resilience of the entire city system and ensuring its functioning and existence. Fires and deficiencies of infrastructure, blackouts or epidemics, these all are real threats in which the aforementioned catastrophologists see the truth and which we must also bear in mind when deciding, managing and planning the city.

5.3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Experience from a country which in the past 150 years has been through a development via many different political systems – a multinational monarchy, inter-war democracy, totalitarian regime, wild capitalism, anchorage in Western European supranational structures – is extraordinary when looking for answers to questions posed in the introduction.

Natural development built on long-term development trajectories was specific even in contemporary post-communist cities. However, despite this, if we look inside the urban structures thoroughly, especially at their inequalities and hierarchies, it is possible to overcome even the highly contradictory developmental tendencies and to find the naturalness for further urban development planning once again.

Rather than planning, it is a sequence of decisions, let's say merged into a certain succession – thus, management. Planning, especially strategic planning, in the mirror of the experience of post-communist countries seems to be at least a confusion of notions, but rather an activity of "planning for planning itself".

The solution for overcoming the developmental discrepancies of the post-communist city is the understanding of the deepest developmental processes – concentration and thinning – and subsequently the identification of their influence on the developmental structures existing in the city and further operating. By setting an appropriate degree of flexibility for different areas of the city, and by priority effort in resilience of newly built structures, it is possible to establish, after the era of a too much swinging pendulum of the social development, the much needed stability of further development and to avoid the developmental excesses that get repeated.

The example of Prague, a city well appreciated by tourists, but not so well perceived from the viewpoint of its own inhabitants in the current situation of a large increase of living costs, seems to be more than suitable in this respect.

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