Political mission of urban planning: reconciling conflicting development goals

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Abstract. In the polemic of urban planning discussions, the problems of the incompleteness of the theoretical basis and the unreliability of the proposed guidelines for solving real-world problems have long been discussed. Therefore, without consistent guidelines, planners are forced to rely on intuition and common sense in often contradictory directions of choice. In addition, the picture of development context is much more complicated due to the ever-increasing uncertainty of outlook and the growing momentum of environmental and economic challenges. Today, the task of improving the methodology for predicting changes in human settlements and their impact on local and global ecosystems is particularly acute. Assessing potential short- and long-term social impacts requires the deployment of large-scale studies to quickly present and compare predicted results. This will allow to assess the impact of urban growth on the evolution of ecosystems. Since little attention is paid to macro-regional forecasting issues, there are no proper assessments of the social consequences of planned decisions. In the political discourse of professional societies and institutions, many of these issues are also remain unaddressed.

1 Introducing the areas of concerns

The public mission of urban planning is to provide a spatial order assembled on the principles of social justice, economic efficiency, environmental harmony, and aesthetic clarity. Urban planning aims to ensure the viability of socio-economic development by identifying areas for the “space production” [1]. Urban resilience and the liveability of cities become benchmarks for evaluating the effectiveness of spatial development. Given the complexity of the tasks of effectively promoting the planning mission, there is a need to organize capacity building to use more efficient and innovative mechanisms and technologies to manage natural resources against the backdrop of growing socio-economic and political challenges [2-3].

At length, economic growth has dominated the political agenda for human settlements development. Activities to provide a free market for urban development operations have led to the emergence of the "enabling strategies" principles. Influential development agencies have used them as benchmarks to count the success of human settlements. Today, they are the subject, along with the basic principles of “market urbanism”, of serious criticism. Now

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it is clearer that for successful development, economic growth must occur within the context of social justice and environmental sustainability. The question arises as to how these principles can be implemented, given the conflicting nature of the objectives.

This desired "sustainable" development is formed as a kind of symbiosis of a harmonious interweaving of ecological, economic, and social. A realistic view of the essence of the processes marks the problems along the way. Modern development models contain a conflict between the economic, environmental, and social dimensions within the urban agenda. This predetermines the dialectic of what the normative goals of urban planning should be. No neutral content appears from all sides. On the contrary, each of the parties is looking for ways to realize its advantages by reducing the effective power of others. The normative goals of new development programs deserve and require a conscious choice based on a careful collection of facts, guided by agreed principles and standards of being [4-5].

Urban planning acquires an important mission - the harmonization of the spatial structure. This will manifest itself both in the thematic focus of project work and in building relationships within the planning process itself. The effectiveness of urban development depends on the adequacy of governance mechanisms. As for the procedures and algorithms for territorial planning, considering regional differences in income levels and socio-economic development, they should correspond to the nature of the tasks they face counting the resource availability. At the same time, the dangers of the old approaches are becoming more and more obvious. Our research highlights the key characteristics of planning systems that can be fine-tuned to help ensure it: functionality, efficiency, and competence [3, 5].

2 Assessing development context

Development paradigms that intend solving pressing urban problems through the activation of market forces proved problematic. Market mechanisms influenced development by stimulating large-scale relocation of production sites and intensification of trade. However, this did not always meet social expectations. The urban planning practice at the same time sought to use the available opportunities for the formation of spatial order. Confidence in the ability of such approaches to effectively manage development inspired great hopes. The prospects being built seemed promising for the economic development of cities, the formation of urban culture and the promotion of innovation in urban planning mechanisms. The future was revealed itself as a dynamic and promising process of well-being development and progress. The strategic initiatives of such paradigms assumed an increase in the level of socio-economic development. However, for some regions this led to an accelerated "development of underdevelopment"[6].

The implementation of the principles of sustainable development modifies the fundamental principles of urban policy in terms of the consumption and production of urban resources - urban spaces, urban assets. New paradigms challenge traditional models of economic growth and involve the search for new models that meet the urgent needs of the urban community. While the doctrine previously held that profit maximization and consumer satisfaction in a market system are compatible with wealth maximization, market imperfections are now becoming increasingly apparent. They can only be corrected by including appropriate mechanisms of state and municipal government [7].

There is a growing awareness that smart and sustainable urban development cannot be achieved through market forces alone [3, 8]. An attempt is being made to solve urgent urban planning issues within the framework of strategic plans for the socio-economic development of cities. An agreed definition of development prospects and directions, building a roadmap within the framework of an indicative concept, then choosing “key
indicators” to assess the state of the socio-ecological situation in cities and regions will ensure the transition to new paradigms of balanced spatial development. Modern practice shows various difficulties in implementing the principles of sustainable development policy. It will not be possible to overcome them if the urban planning system does not have the appropriate regulatory and legal support and legal powers.

It was believed that by modernizing the planning system, it would be possible to stimulate and support innovative approaches and ensure effective partnerships. To stimulate and improve the operation of feedback mechanisms, alternative databases began to appear, including "urban observatories", "urban barometers". Balanced scorecards were also introduced and then developed. International institutions have launched a global urban indicators program to monitor the development of cities around the world, and local events have been organized to improve urban governance.

3 Reappraising development paradigms

Politicians and urban planners tried to make the best use of the fruits of the proposed programs to build a new spatial order. Strong confidence in the ability to predict the trajectory of development inspired great hopes. The identified prospects also looked promising for the economic development of cities, the improvement of urban culture and the promotion of innovations in urban planning mechanisms. The future was a dynamic and promising process of universal unity and progress. In the strategic initiatives of such an enterprise, it was supposed to ensure an increase in the level of socio-economic development. However, for many regions of the world this led to an accelerated "development of underdevelopment" [6]. Market mechanisms have made their own adjustments to the structuring of globalisation processes, stimulating large-scale relocation of production sites and intensification of trade. However, development paradigms that offered solutions to urban problems through the activation of market forces proved problematic [1, 4, 8].

An unprecedented migration of attractive or influential ideas for urban planning and development in the second half of the last century, and this flow continues to this day. True, the expected hopes have not taken ground, but what is even worse - in very cases of direct copying - turned into devastated shortcomings in this area. Planners and authorities are trying to figure out why the results are falling short of expectations. Flashy plans for architectural expression or powerful market programs have been based on the vulnerable basis of one-sided ideas about the real consequences of proposed urban transformations. The environmental harmonisation challenge requires a rethinking of the development paradigms and the definition of tasks for creating humane and liveable cities.

Information systems are becoming a valuable tool for improving the efficiency of urban planning solutions. By providing fast access to enormous amounts of data, they allow modelling the impact of proposed development programs. Any changes in urban planning systems caused by territorial growth, demographic changes, functional saturation associated with changes in living conditions can mirror with a system of indicators. An important quality of the indicator is its targeting. Indicators should not only have a clear information addressee, but also contribute to the achievement of strategic development goals and to ensuring optimal parameters for the quality of life. As already noted, the competitiveness of the city, which is an important condition for its development, cannot be reached without achieving an appropriate standard of living.

Understanding the depth and complexity of global and regional challenges raises questions about assessing the consequences of restructuring and defragmenting existing socio-economic systems. The situation is aggravated by the influence of poorly regulated market processes, coupled with the consequences of hasty political decisions. Prospects for
regional and global spatial development can and should be built by filling gaps in understanding the changing dynamics of land use and promoting measures to counter the development of negative trends.

The phenomenon of information incompleteness, which manifests itself in this context, becomes a serious obstacle to ensuring the effectiveness of the urban planning system. There is a growing awareness that smart and sustainable urban development cannot be achieved through market forces alone. An attempt was made to solve the pressing problems of urban planning within the framework of strategic plans for the socio-economic and political development of cities. Agreed prospects and directions of development, building a "road map" within the framework of the concept of indicative planning, and then choosing "key indicators" to assess the state of the socio-ecological situation in the region. Cities will make it possible to make the transition to new paradigms of balanced spatial development of urban planning systems [9-11].

4 Changing scope of planning

With the realization of our inability to predict the long-range urban perspectives, all the acuteness of the problems associated with the planning of urban development is exposed. With the understanding of new realities, the system of urban planning faces qualitatively new tasks. They are associated not only with the acquisition of spatial harmony by the urban structure, but also with the improvement of development management processes, increasing the efficiency of their own organization [12]. The known "successes and failures" or "ups and downs" of the planning system are theoretically explained by its ability to evaluate prospects, set priorities, and promote social, environmental, and economic aspects.

The key question of how to deal with processes that cannot be correlated with known patterns of system behaviour becomes especially relevant today. Planning dilemmas arise from rapidly changing development conditions. Not only do they not imply changes in the socio-economic and environmental spheres, but they also raise concerns about the uncertainty and reliability of spatial planning paradigms. Reform and innovation can only partially solve the problems, but finding viable alternatives without assessing all potential risks and threats will be difficult, if not impossible [13-14].

Attempts to predict the future of an urban planning object, relying only on intuition and existing experience, do not meet the conditions of the new era. Under conditions of increasing uncertainty, effective management requires the inclusion of new management mechanisms, including an improved apparatus for assessing potential risks and threats. It is possible that foresight technologies can help improve urban forecasting if they are supported by a more robust methodological platform for impact assessment.

Today, the task of improving the methodology for predicting changes in settlements and their impact on local and global ecosystems is especially acute. Assessing their potential short- and long-term impacts requires appropriate research. This will allow us to assess the dynamics of urban growth during the transformation of ecosystems. Little attention is paid to the issues of macroregional forecasting and land use planning. In the political discourse of international development organizations, many of these themes are also neglected. Building a perspective will help you more realistically assess all the consequences.

Problems arise when the most important actors create the illusion of empowering people, and the power structures, so to speak, relieve themselves of responsibility for the future. All this encourages us to take a fresh look at the problems of planning and forecasting. Building prospects for regional development involves mobilizing the necessary actions. These initiatives must be properly justified by a multifaceted assessment and a balanced
understanding of the unprecedented nature of the changes that are taking place. Capacity building for regional planning is more relevant than ever [15, 16].

Emerging planning deficits contribute to the manifestation of the "scarcity crises" that accompany them, and under conditions of widespread scarcity of resources, the situation worsens to such an extent that the phenomenon of "development of underdevelopment" begins to prevail in development paradigms. This does not mean that it goes unnoticed as there is a growing awareness that innovation must be encouraged to improve the planning system. Innovation is also key to building the future of cities, given the difficulty of assessing local priorities and the growing context.

Attempts to predict the future of a city-planning object, relying only on intuition and existing experience, do not meet the conditions of the new time. In the context of growing uncertainty, effective management requires new mechanisms for shaping the future. Forecasting mechanisms are diverse, but they all have their limitations for representing the picture of the future. Foresight goes much further than forecasting, as it is based on a more advanced methodological platform and demonstrates the possibility of assessing the consequences of choices in relation to the future.

### 5 Stretching horizons of planning

The riddles of the relationship between theory and practice of urban planning have become relevant. In the controversy of urban planning discussions, the issues of the shortcomings of the theoretical base and the unreliability of the proposed guidelines for solving practical problems have long been discussed. Therefore, in the absence of reliable guidance, planners are forced to rely on intuition and rely on common sense in often conflicting directions. At the same time, the picture of modernity is becoming much more complicated due to the ever-increasing uncertainty of prospects and the growing dynamics of external challenges.

Working together to build a perspective is fraught with certain difficulties, not to mention practical assessments of the consequences arising from this. Problems arise when the most significant players demonstrate the illusion of expanding the opportunities of the population, and the power structures, as it were, relieve themselves of responsibility for the emerging future. All this makes us take a fresh look at the problems of planning and forecasting. Building prospects for spatial development involves mobilizing the necessary actions. These initiatives must be properly justified by a multifaceted assessment and a balanced understanding of the unprecedented nature of the changes that are taking place. Capacity building for regional planning is more relevant than ever before [3, 8, 9].

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The planning system faces an objective need to expand predictive models traditionally based on known facts and experience. The practical necessity of forming a broad and detailed vision of urban planning prospects based on foresight, foresight and foresight is increasingly recognized. This requires appropriate preparation, the foundation of which is now being laid as part of the adaptation of Foresight to urban planning. Thus, it is recognized that intelligent growth must be based on foresight to ensure sustainable, progressive, and secure development.
Foresight technologies, judging by the experience (for the most part) in related industries, differ both in content and in the depth of development, both in terms of the spatial and temporal horizons of consideration. At the same time, significant differences are noted both in the composition of experts and in the forms of resource support for developments. Foresight is not a dogma, there is no single correct construction algorithm - it adapts to real conditions every time [13-15].

The evolving system of urban planning through the political process promises to solve the pressing problems of development, ensuring, among other things, the diversity of the urban base, the competitiveness of cities and regions. All this is achieved by developing the attractiveness of their business and improving the quality of life. The quality of life is determined by several factors, of which the characteristics of employment and material well-being of the population are significant; quality of urban housing stock (slum prevention); operation of social and engineering infrastructure systems; life safety.

The viability of the urban planning system is ensured by an adequate understanding of the degree and structure of uncertainty with an appropriate assessment of the risks arising from this. The creativity of the urban planning system is ensured by its ability to recognize emerging environmental thresholds of uncertainty. The functionality of the urban planning system is due to its ability to overcome the thresholds of uncertainty through the choice of adequate planning paradigms and the use of appropriate decision evaluation tools. The effectiveness of the urban planning system is predetermed by the development of mechanisms and tools that allow solving the problems of information and legal uncertainty. The competence of the urban planning system is determined by its ability to overcome the thresholds of uncertainty through adequate development and building up of urban planning potential.

6 Framing spatial visions

The world is increasingly confronted with global security and safety issues. New conflicts are emerging due to the lack of resources and development opportunity, migration flows and wealth inequality. Global development trends are determined by the climate changes and new pressing economic challenges. Changing and re-evaluating these trends requires a political restructuring of cooperation and leadership based on rules that supported by international institutional development. However, a cursory reading of current events suggests that the institutional structure must adapt to such rapid changes. If this does not happen, then the unstable order develops into a chaos of regional ethnic conflicts, trade and migration, the struggle for development resources.

Some expectations are associated with the development of mechanisms for cooperation and monitoring of development conditions within the policy frameworks for strengthening city resilience. Unfortunately, main international sites did not offer proper guidelines. The New Urban Agenda adopted by the UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development has done very little in this regard. Even at the time of the document was launched, and now, many questions remain unanswered: what's new? what is urban? where is the agenda? The current stage of urban development is under the enormous pressure by the growing resource scarcity [5, 11, 13].

Cities and regions compete to attract business activity, investment flows, service opportunities, infrastructure provision, etc. Factors drive the evolution of segmented, isolated, and fragmented settlement systems towards a global system. The emerging global system required all participants in human settlements development to discuss and agree on a spatial perspective as a common vision of such development. It is imperative to avoid political clashes, conflicting explosions of interests, intentions, which now represent a new
challenge for planners. This task of unprecedented scale requires planners to develop a spatial development perspective at the macro-regional level.

Such a task fits well with regional efforts to support peaceful development and help build the basis for mutual development through sectoral policy coordination. By developing the traditional perspective, a peaceful and prosperous process of spatial development can be ensured. This makes it possible to avoid local development crises. International cooperation initiatives in response to the accelerated pace of mobility can benefit from common spatial planning principles and concepts. Today it is important to have a common base as a basis for a wide range of industry initiatives. It is important to note that the formation of spatial development prospects should be based on the following principles:

Political consensus imposes the perspective of global spatial development as a political act to transform knowledge into action. It considers all the most important aspects of development and thus provides the legal basis for the spatial organization of socio-economic development.

The legal framework brings together internationally recognized solutions to social, physical, and environmental demands that encourage policy makers to act in the best interests of all, especially in environmentally sensitive areas where views and interests often clash.

Analytical assessments confirm that territorial planning should be presented as an open process based on democratic procedures with strong leadership in a mature political culture. This principle is extremely important to move forward in shaping the desired perspective of spatial development, learning from mistakes and achievements, so that political wisdom can turn forward-looking information into a reasonable course of action [14-17].

An important task of urban planning is to safeguard the public interest. Given the increased role of the private sector in urban planning, reconciliation of private and public interests becomes the main task of the planning system. In the urban context, the process of managing the structural distribution and spatial orientation of investment flows should be built in such a way that the decisions made are optimal and effective both at the local, regional, and federal levels. However, the urban planning system does not always adequately perceive and reflect the real essence of the processes of socio-economic development. Therefore, it is proposed to evaluate urban planning management and the quality of the environment, which must be correlated with the efficiency factors of the spatial and functional organization of the territory. Probabilistic algorithms for recognizing the risks of urban planning activities due to “ignorance” of the “unknown” open a new perspective for improving planning systems.

7 Summing up

Compliance of the planning system with the level and complexity of the tasks to be solved is the basis for the successful development of the city. Thus, the tasks of improving the urban management system have long been on the agenda, but the tools for their implementation do not always provide the expected results. For example, the hasty implementation of reforms on decentralization and privatization has destroyed the work of mechanisms for harmonizing, coordinating, and balancing global, regional, and local interests [3, 15-16].

In the new socio-economic conditions, town planning must become a guarantor of the protection of public interests and ensure social justice. To ensure a conflict-free transformation of the urban space, it is necessary to reform the mechanisms of land management and planning. Planning should address not only issues of securing the rights of private investors and developers, but above all the protection and provision of public interests. The issues of diversity of living spaces, ecological comfort, and environmental
protection, as well as the availability of housing and services, an adequate standard of living resonate in a new way.

The advantage of innovative approaches is that, alongside the choice of development paths and directions, mutually acceptable ways to achieve them are determined from a socio-economic, environmental, and political perspective. Thus, it seems possible to avoid a distortion of the objective at the lower levels, which we will express through the quality of the environment and the level of development. Without going into the details of the projects of specialists in the treatment of sick cities, it should be noted that this is an area of extensive research, and this scientific work is increasingly in demand [17].

In the new urban planning paradigms, the quality-of-life indicator becomes the main criterion for evaluating the political success of development. It is this indicator that determines the effectiveness of the functioning of socio-economic subsystems at different levels of the urban structures. In this respect, the improvement of the urban planning system will be accompanied by the development of feedback channels allowing the points of view of all the stakeholders to be considered [13, 18-19]. Thus, the improvement of the urban planning system must be associated not only with the implementation of the principles of decentralization, but also with the improvement of the whole urban planning management system.

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