

Consultations with the hares – problem of public participation in the spatial planning process at the Warsaw suburban zone

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The inclusion of various stakeholders in the cities transformation process is currently one of the most important and the most difficult aspects of spatial planning. Planning practice, however, shows that there is much to be done to ensure that the participation is fair, just and useful for making optimal spatial decisions. The article draws attention to the fact that the organization of public participation process in planning procedures requires appropriate selection of participants and adequate methods. Inclusion of the local community in spatial planning, based only on the fulfillment of their demands, expressed in the comments to the draft documents, does not lead to rational solutions in spatial planning. Expectations of different parties to participation processes are often divergent. Particularly controversial is social participation in the planning of agricultural land conversion, changing the status of farmland from agricultural to residential, in the suburban zones. It is difficult to select participants and land owners are not interested in any proposals that would improve the spatial structure of the transformed areas (for example in the process of land consolidation and division). These problems will be presented on the example of public consultations conducted by the author in the planning procedures for the communes of Jabłonna and Wólka Młodzka in Otwock, located in the agglomeration of Warsaw.

Key words: participants selection, spatial planning, urban design, land consolidation, sprawl, Warsaw Agglomeration

Introduction

Sustainable development makes the basic rule for the planning process; one of its priorities is to provide the opportunity to fulfil the basic needs of specific communities and individual citizens. On that account, inclusion of local communities into the planning process and procedures is so crucial.

Issues related to social participation in the spatial planning are not a novelty. An obligation to carry out public consultations has been always entered into all Polish acts related to land management¹, although within the years 1946 - 1994 legal regulations may have been deceptive in relation to inclusion of local societies into shaping space. Significance of participation in the planning process has been emphasized for many years in international conventions, such as Agenda Habitat adopted during the United Nations Conference in Istanbul in 1996 or the Aarhus Convention that was ratified by Poland in 2001. Importance of informing citizens significantly grew and strengthened in Poland upon adoption of the Act on access to public information in 2001. Participation has been a sub-

ject of some research and environmental conferences, e.g. those organised by Towarzystwo Urbanistów Polskich (Society of Polish Town Planners) or The Faculty of Architecture of the Warsaw University of Technology. Broadly defined participation was studied and described multiple times, however in respect of the planning procedures it has not been taken up frequently in Poland though some studies are particularly worth to be mentioned; these include: Buczek [7], Gawryszewska [8], Hanzl [9], Siemiński [10], Wrona [11] or Zuziak [12].

It should be noted that publications related to participation in spatial planning are rarely supported with studies for effectiveness, appropriateness, and methodology of participation in the planning process procedures. In the meantime, it became necessary both to meet statutory obligations and find a manner to increase the range of the subjectivity of participants to social dialogue in order to carry it out properly. As a result, increasing level of social participation becomes a challenge for the planning process procedures that have been included in the Act on planning and development. Abandonment of statutory minimum, transition to penetrating strategy of actions based on real dialogue

¹ [1] Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland as of 16 February 1928 on the Building Code and housing estate development, Art. 25, 26, 28, 31 – 34; [2] Decree as of 2 April 1946 on planned spatial development of Poland, Art. 18, 25 – 28; [3] Act as of 30 December 1948 on amendment of the Regulation of the President of the Republic of Poland as of 16 February 1928 on the Building Code and housing estate development, Art. 25-28, 30-34; [4] Act as of 12 July 1984 on spatial planning, Art. 27 – 29; [5] Act as of 7 July 1994 on the spatial development, Art. 18, 23, 24; [6] Act as of 27 March 2003 on planning and spatial development, Art. 11, 17, 18.

and participation seem to be appropriate approach – increasing social capital – which is a driver of change to the manner of conduct related to imperative operations. „Urban activity” that has been growing in Poland recently favours such approach. The need to open the doors to social projects has been also increased; local governments have been taking up actions to a greater extent to include local communities into shaping space. In some cases such approach cause multiple misunderstandings; one of the major source of such confusions seems to be inappropriate selection of participants of the social dialogue and improper perception of the process of participation [12, 13, 14].

“To participate” shall mean: to take active part, to be involved or co-operate. However, the planning process procedures that are maintained by Polish local governments usually define participation as expressing wishes and requests that – to a greater or lesser extent – are fulfilled during the development planning. It happens quite often, that it results in demanding attitude and becomes in contradiction with real participation. Improper social participation in shaping space may be sometimes an impediment while planning sensible development. It should be remembered that the problem of participation of local societies in development of cities features numerous aspects and various „viewpoints.” Participation may be a „grateful” issue and an interesting process in case of actions of small, integrated social groups related to improvement to improve their living environment; it is also an important and dramatically difficult issue in terms of NIMBY² syndrome during determination of locations for the technical infrastructure. Sometimes it is simply irrational or even unnecessary. It happens for example when it comes to negotiate – with owners of farmlands – the rules for conversion their fields into housing estates to the benefit of future unknown recipients. I am used to name such procedure „consultations with the hares” since such fields as well as the vicinities subject to consultation are non-occupied. This paper’s purpose is to highlight the fact that social participation is a controversial issue in case of transformation of farmlands into housing estates within impact zones of big cities that are subject not only to investment pressure but also to land speculations. In Warsaw agglomeration (as in the vicinity of most Polish cities), agricultural production has been disappearing rapidly for almost 30 years, although the classes of agricultural land and the long-standing agricultural tradition would allow for continued cultivation. Selling land or speculation has become easier and more profitable than farming, which is supported by local authorities, which earmark huge areas of land for development.

One may have asked „who is the owner of the Warsaw suburban area?” in order to modify the title of interdisci-

plinary monograph on Warsaw space change mechanism that particularly explores the issue related to city’s and its space user’s characteristics [15]. Assuming that the suburban zone symbolically „belongs” to its local residents thus its general view will be linked with elements of land development that have impact on quality of housing estate and the value of the land. However, upon analysis of the manner of perception of suburban zone by the residents of the central city, such perception may be totally different. The elements that attract residents and investors to suburban zones are, at the same time, the most important ones that Warsaw inhabitants would like to retain „for themselves” such as passable transport routes and intact open fields [14]. Thus it is necessary to find out if expectations of the central city residents should – in any manner – be translated into their participation in shaping suburban zones that in the past have been back-up facilities, and then recreational facilities to the benefit of city residents. The question is if only the owners of such areas and residents of such zone should settle that matter. It is a very first dichotomy of attitudes related to potential participants of the process.

The major problem of the Warsaw suburban area is the lack of social control for planning procedures and spatial policy by the local governments that would motivate broadly defined housing environment. In all communes of the Warsaw conurbation, even those in which the most dynamical increase in new resident quantity has been observed, the predominant group includes residents that settled there before the investment boost at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries³. These are mainly owners of areas that have been interested in taking advantage of location of their property within beneficial impact of the capital city and its related alteration of land use classification into building lands and their subsequent – quick or spread over time – sale. For this reason, majority of local societies demand actions for changing the status of farm land from agricultural to residential by the local governments, while those who are interested in limitation of non-controlled urbanisation and exaggerated increase in the building lands make minority in the society. The dominant majority puts pressure on the local governments that in the name of false assumption of „social justice” maintain populist policy for satisfying claims of major number of area owners, if possible. It is basically local reflection of trends in the entire country, however in communes it is perceptible in the spatial policy including development of planning documentation and on the nationwide level – so far – it is perceptible in mechanisms of formation of legal regulations and priorities in adopted regulations.

„From the sociological point of view it may be supposed that such ideology is a repercussion of the Polish society condi-

² NIMBY – Not In My Back Yard.

³ Migration balance in the entire Warsaw suburban zone, expressed as absolute numbers, within the years 1999–2011 was 146 712 persons for 3 million 255 600 inhabitants of the zone in 2010. Even upon consideration of population growth after 1994 (at that time first new housing estates were established) those number are incomparable. Data as per GUS (Polish Central Statistical Office).

tion. At commencement of the political transformation it had (certainly in 95%) its roots in the countryside. By the way, it is not related to the place of residence – approximately 60% of population used to live in the cities those times – but it is related directly to family possession of land in the countryside that corresponds to its succession. Wherefore, absolute pressure on statutory assurance of potential possibility to form capital through allotment of farmland to building land without limitations as well as excluding work or financial equity contribution has been put (so called Polish <<wonderland>>). (...) None of the Polish governments of political transformation – so far – dared to restrict such entitlements in fear of loss of electorate (...)" [16, s.33].

Local authorities likewise the local governments – as part of struggle for voters – stand for maximum enlarging building lands and making regulations related to local planning more flexible, except that such approach excludes future users of areas from the planning process as those users are not known yet in major cases. Thus it is the second dichotomy in the range of social participation within suburban areas.

The purpose of this study was to highlight the subject and determine the major problems that occur during social participation within the Warsaw suburban area, including causes and results that are reflected in space development.

Methods

Two selected communes in the Warsaw conurbation – Jabłonna and Otwock – were included in the study. Both municipalities are located in the suburban zone of Warsaw, and the phenomena occurring on them can be considered as representative for the whole agglomeration and many urban areas in Poland.

The initial material for analyses was the results of the research that was carried out in 2013; partly published [Solarek 2013]. Remarks that were submitted during the public consultation of Study of the Conditions and Directions of the Spatial Management of the Jabłonna Commune have been listed and analysed (SUiKZP) [17]. Some curious observations result from comparison of the range of problems raised by local community in the course of local planning procedures depending on particular interests. These appear in a form of motions to the planning process, remarks upon making SUiKZP open to the public and during public discussions. Document of SUiKZP includes remarks that were submitted to the draft upon making it open to the public by representatives of each group of discontented entities. Analysing such remarks enabled determination of the core problem related to divergence of expectations by various participants in the spatial planning.

General conclusions related to the first part of the study were used as a starting point to consecutive fundamental stage of the research. Researches were carried out for part of the city of Otwock. Planning works in the area of Wólka Młodzka in the city of Otwock, carried out by the author, enabled obtaining materials from public consultations re-

lated to anticipated merging procedure and a new lands parcel. Analysis of assumptions related to alterations of the development, formal conditions, development variant concepts, calculations and area balance as well as results of consultations were carried out in turn. Such research enabled assessing real causes for alterations of land use classification. Subsequently, it enabled assessing the process of public consultations within converted suburban zones and articulating the final conclusions.

Results and discussion

Gmina Jabłonna case study

Jabłonna district is located to the Northern border of Warsaw and linked to the regional road and the railway line. Since the end of the 1990s it has been subject to significant investment pressure and some of its areas such as in the vicinity of Jabłonna, Chotomów and Dąbrowa Chotomowska have been largely developed with residential buildings located thereon. Though, many open non-developed areas have been still available such as large stretches of state forest, the Vistula Valley, and vast wastelands. Agricultural production was nearly entirely stopped while the property owners have been looking forward to its conversion into the residential development. Several nature protection areas including Natura 2000 (the Mid-Vistula valley and planned the Kampinos Vistula Valley), four nature reserves, and the Warsaw Special Protection Area (Warszawski Obszar Chronionego Krajobrazu) are established within this area. Conversion of part of these areas into residential development has been also expected. In the Study of the Conditions and Directions of the Spatial Management of Jabłonna Commune [16.], which was enacted in 2015, an attempt was made to balance the needs for protection of environment and landscape, the expectations of the land owners and investors, as well as the needs of present and future residents. However it does not mean that all the assumptions were successfully delivered; one of the reasons seems to stand in contradiction with specific developmental targets and social desirabilities (Fig. 1).

This document (SUiKZP) aroused controversy upon its making open to the public during statutory and non-statutory public consultations. Spatial Planning and Land Development Act [6.] includes direct public participation in the course of compilation of the local spatial management plan and study (SUiKZP), that consists in: (1) bringing in applications to the document, (2) familiarisation with the draft plan/study when it is made open to the public, and participation in public discussion on accepted solutions related to, (3) submission of remarks for the draft plan/study [Act 2003]. Additionally, Jabłonna authorities arranged meetings for designers and residents of individual villages or groups of such villages. In the course of consultations, residents, investors, and owners presented their expectations that stood frequently in contradiction. There was not even will to compromise between the parties and individual

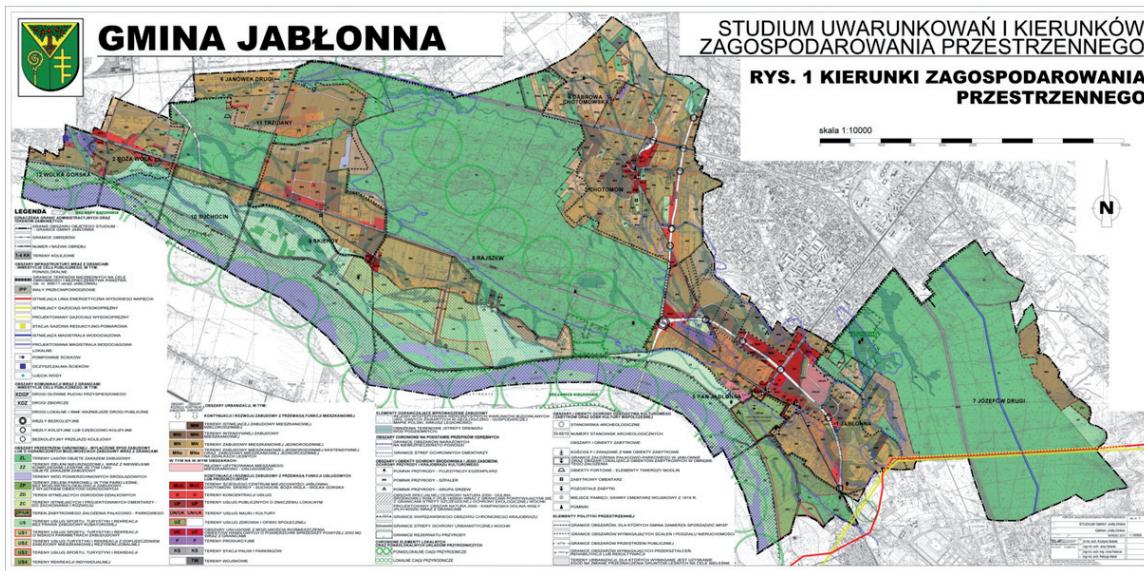


Fig. 1. The main drawing of Study of the Conditions and Directions of the Spatial Management of Jabłonna Commune
Source: official Jabłonna website.

entities that participated those meetings. Persons and companies dissatisfied with provisions of the draft SUiKZP submitted remarks to the document. The following table includes remarks submitted by representatives of various dissatisfied groups to the draft SUiKZP upon making it open to the public; these include: (1) area owners who are interested only in the most profitable sale – in most cases the owners do not even stay in the vicinity of the area included in the draft SUiKZP, (2) investors interested in implementation of anticipated projects and in increasing value of the areas, (3) residents interested in proper living condi-

tions and availability to eye-catching natural areas. This list shows only remarks from the parties that represent their particular interests, since none of the parties (probably except part of the residents who do not possess any agricultural lands within the district) represented broadly defined public interest (including protection of natural and landscape values, sustainable development, and spatial order) (Tab. 1).

The list shown in the foregoing table indicates several regularities. First of all, it may be noted that during provision of planning documents that include conversion of

Table 1. List of remarks to the Draft Study of the Conditions and Directions of the Spatial Management of Jabłonna Commune submitted by various parties. Source: own elaboration [14]

REMARKS SUBMITTED BY THE OWNERS INTERESTED IN SALE OF THE AREA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Objection against designation of green areas with the ban on building. The draft study is to burden the plots owners with all inconveniences preventing their correct development and sales. Cost of housing or road construction, or provision of utilities within protected Natura 2000 areas is to be multiplied. Property right is not respected. Art. 1 section 2 item 7 of the Spatial Planning and Land Development Act requires that planning and spatial development shall consider ownership rights. The draft study does not include any forecast related to free trade area prices when the provision related to formation of green areas is adopted.
REMARKS SUBMITTED BY THE INVESTORS INTERESTED IN INCREASING VALUE OF THE AREA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing max. building height from 12m to 16m in order to enable construction including at least two storeys and potential 14-metre high cinemas; Increasing max. intensity of buildings from 1.5 to 3.0 in order to enhance entire UC area development effectiveness as well as potential extension upon several years of the facility operation;; Decreasing min. percentage of biologically sensitive area from 20% to 10% in order to intensify fixed property development; Enabling relocation of drainage ditch at the same technical conditions; Relocation of the ditch is to enhance development of increased area; Expansion of UC area with US3 area towards east and its inclusion to anticipated communal road (Akademijna Street) in accordance with enclosed drawing; Implementation of locations for information totems up to height of 25 m.
REMARKS SUBMITTED BY THE RESIDENTS INTERESTED IN THE BEST CONDITIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING	Objection against conversion of 1ZL forestland classification into extensive residential development and single-family residential development on MNe forest plots. Taking decisions related to purchase of my plots I was mainly driven by proximity of unpolluted forest and beauty of nature. Such conversion will have adverse effects on environment as a result of alteration of forestlands onto MNe building areas.

agricultural and forest area into residential areas their owners are mainly interested in profitable sale of the land; expectations towards the plan or the study are insignificant however very tangible. Priority has been given to provision of buildings featuring as many as possible types and indices that allow for a dense development. An additional criterion for „correct plan/study” is lack of roads in question as it has been anticipated that the access road to buildings may be constructed in the same manner as in case of access roads to the fields. Potential necessity to indicate a piece of the area for internal roads is allowable provided that as low as possible parameters are accepted. A few years ago, more than 3-metre roads were recognised as prodigally and unjustly designed roads, however those 10-metre wide roads within demarcation lines were named „motorways”. Currently, it is universally known that access roads should be necessarily equipped with various networks and service lines, which require construction of appropriately widened roads. Functions of areas in the vicinity, landscape of complex in question, and its operational efficiency do not arouse any interest.

Investors that are directly interested in implementation of their plans assess the draft plans quite differently. In such cases the most important factor is to acquire respectable area and plot ratios relatively higher than in the neighbourhood. Regulations in draft plans/studies related to technical facilities are also checked for possibilities to obtain numerous alternative solutions for the course of technical infrastructure. Road access from public roads, sectioned beyond anticipated investment areas, are valued, although these have already been initially included in the land development plan and its anticipated profits have been calculated.

Users of urbanised areas are interested in quite different issues whereby these are incumbent inhabitants. Certainly, as all others, they are protesting against construction of new roads and widening the existing ones. Additionally, they pay close attention to prevent the areas from enabling them to become dense through increasing density and widening areas for new investments. Provisions that would lead to implementation of uncomfortable functions are checked; it is sometimes fairly justified however in many cases it leads to articulating imagined fears and emphasising excessively in order to block investments in the vicinity. At that time ideas are bandied around with keynotes related to environment protection and safety [18].

Aspiration to retaining current conditions on the area is pursued most frequently, however – from time to time – an improvement to communication service is also required. Expectations related to enhancement of public space quality have not been anticipated.

This research proved clearly that the goals of various participants of planning procedures vary significantly and are contradictory in most cases. This is particularly evident in these situations when the residential development at the natural areas is expected by landowners who want to earn

from the speculation, while residents of the surrounding areas would prefer that they remain undeveloped. No method related to participation in space shaping, which would favour co-decision-making on future common space, has been drawn up.

Gmina Otwock case study

The area (approx. 356 ha) described in the study is located in the vicinity of Wólka Młodzka – a district of the city of Otwock (not separated formally). Otwock belongs to the central zone of Mazowieckie Province and has been one of the major urban settlements of the Warsaw agglomeration. Natural values of the entire „Otwock strip” make it an important element of the regional natural system as well as a recreational facility for Warsaw residents. The Natura 2000 area, the nature reserve, and the Warsaw Protected Landscape Area – which includes vast areas adjacent to right bank of the river – which are stretched along the Świder River shape crucial green valleys and corridors. Location of the area within Otwock – a city of huge cultural virtues which is an eye-catching natural field – as well as excellent communication links, and proximity to the capital city make this area at the same time attractive for investors. Thus a serious problem seems to be how to balance various needs, arguments, and social expectations as well as limit potential spatial conflicts through suitable determination of the local plan that has been proceeded since 2013 by the authorities of Otwock (Fig. 2).

The countryside passage located along the Świder River has been particularly problematic in the vicinity of protected and eye-catching natural fields. It has been at the same time a wasteland for a couple of years and an easement devoted for residential function determined in the Study of the Conditions and Directions of the Spatial Management of Otwock Commune [19]. Considering adverse, typical for Mazovian countryside, fragmented property divisions SUiKZP indicates this area as a field that requires some mergers and a new land parcelling out. With reference to such conversions, a draft of local spatial development plan was carried out.

In order to establish a new, interesting residential district in Otwock, it was suggested to establish a building complex in a form resembling pre-war garden-city, including suitable access of all plots to the public roads, meeting points for residents, public spaces and basic services. Through an interesting spatial layout not only better living conditions for future residents but also potentials for making investment offers more attractive as well as increasing value of plots would be provided (Fig. 3).

Not later than during presentation of the first draft of the local plan to representatives of the local society, i.e. the City Council (in non-formal proceedings) the designers were provided with an application to develop the second version of the draft, excluding the planning arrangements related to mergers. As a result, two versions of the draft plan

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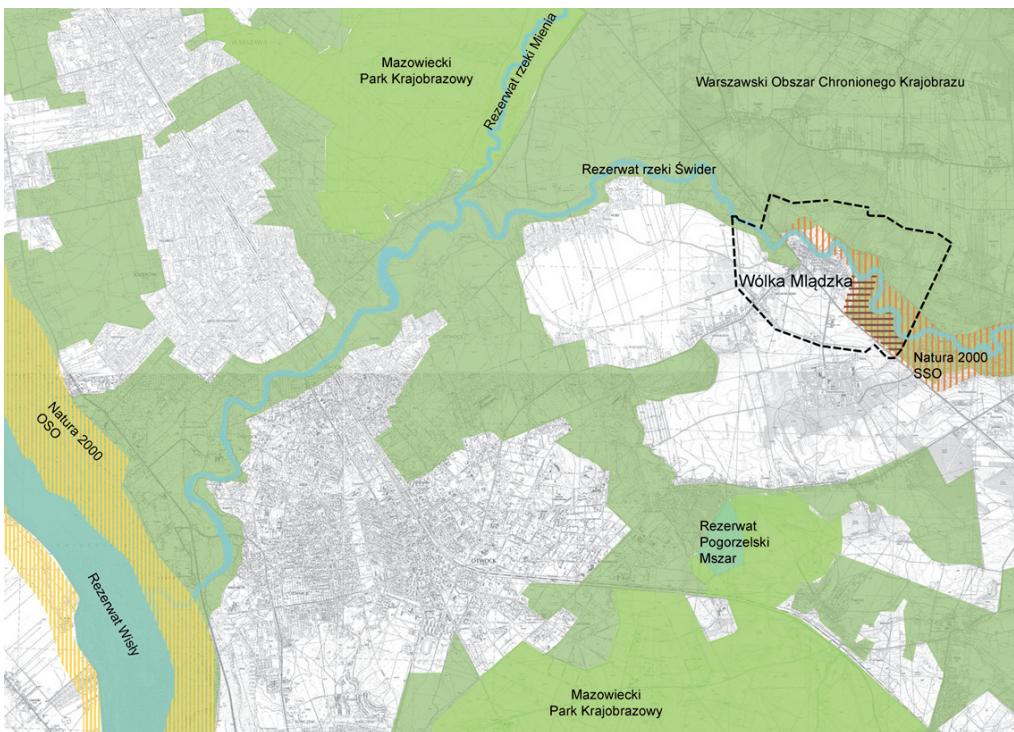


Fig. 2. A map of natural areas in the vicinity of Wólka Młodzka in Otwock
Source: materials of SOL-AR⁴



Fig. 3. Visualisations of the planned buildings as part of the variant, including mergers and a new parcelling out
Source: materials of SOL-AR

were presented to the residents during the meeting in January 2016. In the course of stormy discussion multiple persons, out of approx. 200 members, spoke. It was the time when a decision related to necessity to vote for particular draft plan was taken. The designers provided some simplified drawings for the draft plan, spatial visualisations, and diagrams for both variants: no. 1 – including anticipated mergers and no. 2 – excluding mergers. In both cases, simulations related to effects of the plan implementation were carried out - it was specifically related to potential profits for the owners of the areas. Such simulation was expressed

in percentage share of new plot areas as well as relation of road areas to entire plot areas and entire residential areas (Fig. 4, 5).

In spite of evident result indicating increased rationality of the solution that included mergers and other additional multiple compositional and functional advantages, the majority was for variant 2. This version has been currently proceeded on and very soon it is to be made available to the public as per legal proceedings.

The decision made by way of voting by the owners of Wólka Młodzka plots seems to be incomprehensible as they

⁴ SOL-AR Design Office - Jerzy Solarek, in which the author conducts designs on spatial planning

rejected rational solution that featured numerous advantages. Acceptance of such solution, which was rejected, would enable shaping an interesting district of Otwock. Such district would be interesting for future residents, developers, and residents – even these of other parts of the city or even Warsaw inhabitants who visit the Świdra Valley. Owners' opinion delivered through maximum freedom in making arrangements for their own property including latitude in its development both with reference to its function

and form as well as method and schedule for completion of potential investments settles the matter of scenery of the Warsaw suburban zone.

Aversion to limitation of rights to administer property is fully intelligible and trespassing private properties with public roads and investments, anticipated in the development plans, express opposition both in the Warsaw suburban zone, in Poland and all around the world; such syndrome is known as NIMBY. Nevertheless, inhabitant

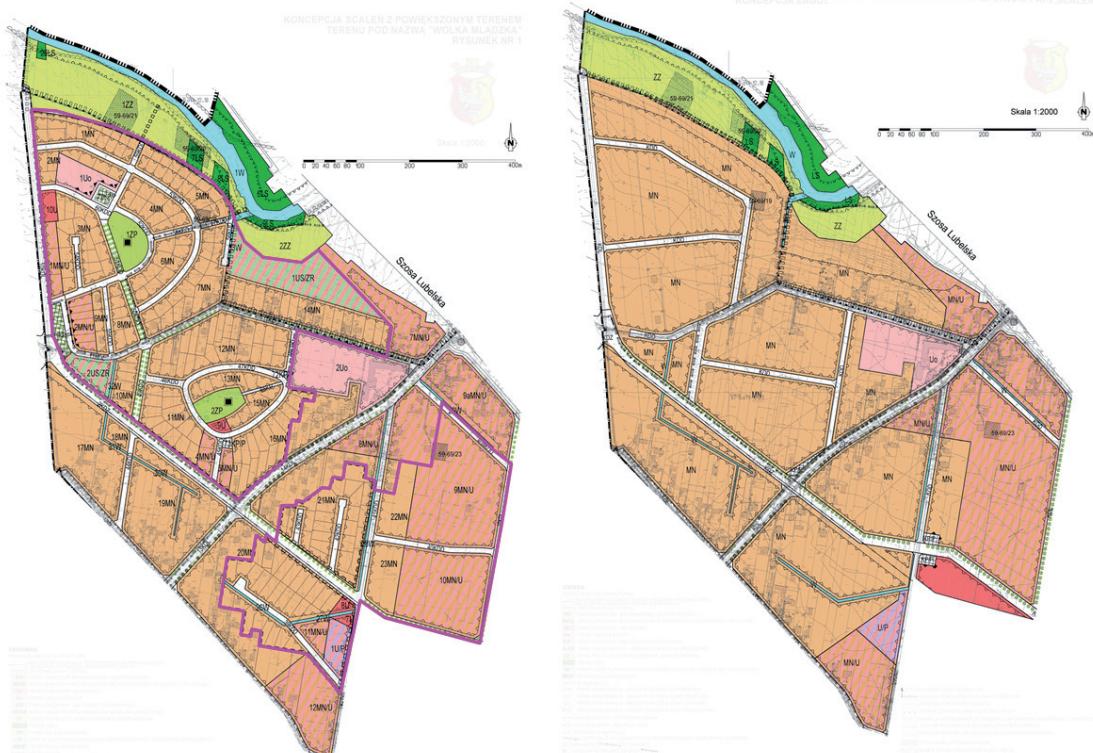


Fig 4. Two variants of a concept for the local spatial development plan for Wólka Młodzka: a) variant 1 – including mergers, b) variant 2 – excluding mergers

Source: materials of SOL-AR

Table 2. Area balance for area A

AREA I - INCLUDING MERGERS	m ²
ENTIRE AREA	126226,8
BUILDING PLOTS	92788,6
ROADS	21461,0
%	
% PLOTS AREA TO ENTIRE AREA	73,51
% ROADS AREA TO ENTIRE AREA	17,00
% ROADS AREA TO PLOTS AREA	23,13

AREA I - INCLUDING MERGERS	m ²
ENTIRE AREA	126226,8
BUILDING PLOTS	92788,6
ROADS	21461,0
%	
% PLOTS AREA TO ENTIRE AREA	73,51
% ROADS AREA TO ENTIRE AREA	17,00
% ROADS AREA TO PLOTS AREA	23,13

Table 2. Area balance for area B

AREA II - INCLUDING MERGERS	m ²
ENTIRE AREA	112163,4
BUILDING PLOTS	73890,3
ROADS	10406,8
%	
% PLOTS AREA TO ENTIRE AREA	65,88
% ROADS AREA TO ENTIRE AREA	9,28
% ROADS AREA TO PLOTS AREA	14,08

AREA II - EXCLUDING MERGERS	m ²
ENTIRE AREA	112163,4
BUILDING PLOTS	69659,1
ROADS	19413,8
%	
% PLOTS AREA TO ENTIRE AREA	62,11
% ROADS AREA TO ENTIRE AREA	17,31
% ROADS AREA TO PLOTS AREA	27,87



Fig 5. Two variants of a concept for the local spatial development plan for Wólka Młodzka, adopted for calculation:
a) variant 1 – including mergers, b) variant 2 – excluding mergers

Source: materials of SOL-AR

environmental fears should be judged differently to reservations from those who are eager to maximise profits regardless of environmental effects. Such effects may be related to neighbouring inhabited areas and future users of converted areas.

Goals of various participants of the planning procedures are diverse and frequently contradictory. Undoubtedly, in order to enhance the quality of the spatial structures it would be legitimate to consider – most of all – opinions of educated local societies. Unfortunately these are in minority in the Warsaw suburban zone. As long as the overwhelming voice in the assessment of local governments does not belong to them, the processes of disharmony sprawl will continue. Hopefully, residents are to be more and more integrated in some parts of the suburban zone in which relatively housing areas have already been located. Taking care of themselves and place of their residence, inhabitants would become interested in social control of actions taken by the local governments in the range of space development and environmental protection.

It appears that the major impediment to the land consolidation is incomprehensibility of regulations related to this procedure and local government's fears for necessity to take too many actions in accordance to it as well as for disapproving opinion of the residents. The general public shall be increasingly well informed about arrangements of development areas; clear promotional actions and words of encouragement shall be phrased as all-level governments should carry these out. Reluctance to merge procedures may also has its roots in the real causes of the allocation of some development sites to local plans. Changing the status of farmland from agricultural to residential in the suburban area of Warsaw, uncovered in real demand for new investment areas, makes farmers who still cultivate their fields uninterested in quick land sales and radical changes. Upon implementation of new division, they could not have used

their former areas thus commencement of consolidation procedures is unacceptable for them.

Conclusions

Two major conclusions result from the research.

The method of selecting participants in the planning processes, which is widespread in Poland, leads to the fact that those who will not be inhabitants, users or neighbours of the area decide about the future form of its development. The reluctance of the land's owners to transform the spatial structure of the areas leads to the formation of irrational and chaotically developed suburbs. Necessity to reorganise land division have not been acknowledged by the authorities and residents of the districts throughout years of applicability of current legal regulations. A manner to include the local society as well as residents of neighbouring areas and future users to the participation process shall be selected carefully as per anticipated goal for such conversions.

In the course of planning social participation in arranging the planning documents it shall be necessary to select properly the methods of consultations and participants themselves. Predominant opinion of the owners of vacant plots, expressed in requests for area allotment for buildable lands and refusal of any real participation in land conversion process, thwarts chances for shaping accurate residential environment for future users, and protection of landscape virtues that are crucial for various residents of cities and agglomerations. Such opinion should not be recognised as true participation in the process of shaping space. It should be equal to the voice of hares living in undeveloped fields (or even less).

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