

## **Urban structure -**

### **Factor of competitive regional economy and inter-communal cooperation.**

Contribution to the International Conference - University of Lodz - Department of the Built Environment and Spatial Policy – 4 to 7 April 2001 - Multipolar Patterns of Urban Development – Competition or Cooperation?

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## **Abstract**

Global tendencies of urban structure changes, resulting from changes in technology and in the economy show first evidence by causing decentralization in the surroundings of big cities (Sassen, 1994). Such changes are taken as a challenge to look for new patterns of urban structure development and for new policies of development guidance in East Germany. The paper acknowledges the differences between east and west German traces of long-term urban structure development. The contribution regards the problems of East-German towns (inner area decline, loss of population, repeated waves of sub-urbanisation under GDR and FRG-governments) as indicators for opportunities in urban structure development. It concentrates on a case of example, a site in the city of Magdeburg, where the property market shows interest despite the fact that the town continues to loose inhabitants since 1990. Being part of the restructuring of an old industrialised area beside an old local core, being located near to the city centre and adjacent to the river Elbe, the site represents equally opportunities for the development of urban structure and of urban space.

The urban qualities of the location indicate the opportunity for a new "nucleus" of urban development and promise a contribution to a competitive regional economy (s. Healey, 1993). Therefore, general criteria for qualities of urban development (Bentley e.a.) are referred to as a scale for evaluating existing and new conditions of the usability and the legibility of urban structures. This scale is supposed to represent processes of development which aim to a differentiated system of private and public spaces in a changing system of interconnected hierarchies of urban space. The article comprises

- firstly, defining the subject and the questions of investigation,
- secondly, introducing the reflection of long term and recent political influences on urban structure and urban space and reminding the major changes in property ownership from 1990,
- thirdly, regarding the case of example concerning indications for "new" patterns of urban development and understandings of co-operation and competition from a practical point of view by evaluating the approach of the "community" in comparison to a students' project, having been supervised by the author,
- finally, drawing conclusions from the case about perspectives for guidance through planning gain which may provide "new" patterns of urban structure, new forms of cooperation and an alternative understanding of competition in the planning and development process.

## 1. Subject and Method

The article relates the key-issues of the conference “Multi-polar patterns of urban development – Cooperation or Competition” to the actual stage of urban transformation in east Germany. It discusses spatial and also political and administrative opportunities for contributing to “new” patterns of urban structure via urban development at individual locations. The discussion implies the very general question which political, socio-spatial and administrative direction urban development in east Germany might take – after 40 years of centralized planning system and after 10 years of capitalist influence through re-unification programmes. This question is narrowed for the specific situation of a case of example in Magdeburg: How much influence may property development gain with respect to the public interest?

The article has taken impulses from reflections about guiding development processes under capitalist conditions for the benefit of the public interest (Healey, e.a. 1992, 1993, 1997). Focussing on the gap between existing opportunities for recognizing and respecting the public interest and ongoing changes, two types of logic are introduced:

- Decreasing the legibility of the urban structure by destroying existing resources of environmental and of spatial qualities for the apparent benefit of selling land in the short term perspective.
- Increasing the legibility of the urban structure, contributing to a spatial framework for urban changes and supporting the establishment of local economies without any guarantee of profit in the short term perspective.

Both the types of logic are considered to be political. Thus, looking for patterns of urban structure and their qualities of urban development implies a political dimension (s. Barnett, 1976) which has to be identified and related to the meanings of “cooperation” and “competition”. As east German cities represent a decrease of quantitative urban growth in combination with a need for re-structuring used land and qualifying void spaces, the political aspect has to be linked to the following alternatives of simultaneous urban structure development at various locations:

- Restricting investment to the already established cores of different origins; strengthening usability and legibility of urban conditions there.
- Supporting investment wherever qualitative changes find opportunities in locally specific conditions; linking existing and arising “nuclei” of urban conditions through improving the usability and legibility of the “arteries” of the urban structure (main roads and open spaces in inner urban areas; landscape in outer urban areas).

Deciding about the alternatives means to evaluate and interpret the regional and local opportunities of urban development systematically and continuously in a critical and creative way.

The article comprises a “theory-practice interplay” by enfolding the question about urban policies around a case study in the east German town Magdeburg. The case has been selected, because a public urban design competition had indicated an interest of private investment. The location stands for a central area within the first ring of old industrialised settlements around the medieval core of the town. It stands also for the old local core of “Buckau” where trade and service have been established between industry and housing. Additionally, it stands for a very attractive peripheral situation alongside the river Elbe offering a variety of opportunities for public and private interests. The interest in private investment has to be considered as a demand for exclusive housing near to the landscape of the riverside. Other demands

can be thought of. However, in consequence of the obvious interest in investment, the case has been regarded as a challenge for discussing how to influence the urban structure by small-spatial intervention.

The article approaches such a discussion by considering the 40-years old phenomenon of “Zwischenstadt” (Sieverts, 1997) in correlation with the much older structural and topological characteristics of the influences of industrialisation on urban structure from around 1850 (Curdes and Ulrich, 1997; Haase, 1999, Curdes, 1999). East German characteristics of urban structure development from 1950 and from 1990 have also been taken into account in order to evaluate the conditions of the case (Breuste, 2000; Moser, 2000; Golnik, 2000). According to these investigations and to the challenge of the case, the paper relates small-spatial urban development to the resulting effects on urban structure and the meaning for the competitiveness of town and region (Healey, 1993).

The case study approach is based on investigations about recent trends of urban development in east Germany (Breuste, 2000; Moser, 2000; Golnik, 2000; Häußermann, 2000). Information about history and current conditions of the case has been provided by the public-private agency (Landesentwicklungsgesellschaft Sachsen-Anhalt) which guides and coordinates projects of major importance in the state of Saxonia-Anhalt and, therefore, has organised the urban design competition. The approach includes also the practical experience of a students’ project for the sites of the case which has been supervised by the author. Differently from the competition, this project operated like a workshop aiming to contribute to the competitiveness of the region by defining an open structure for spatial development over time. The case study evaluates the approach of the competition relative to the students’ project. It draws on different theoretical strands by raising the following questions:

1. Are there any “new patterns” of urban development?
2. Which role does “co-operation” play in the development process?
3. How has “competition” been considered as an aim of planning?

The first question relates the case and the selected process of urban development to historical and current patterns. The scale for identifying a “new pattern” refers to the spatial organisation and arrangement of land uses and the system of private and public spaces. Herewith, the study follows the implied question whether mono-functions are still contributing to a competitive urban environment.

The second and third question take views from the British planning system. Most important of this trace is the close link between forms and spatially relevant contents of decision-making. The critical view upon spatial symptoms and their political backgrounds has its reasons in the outcomes of the Thatcher era in Great Britain: conglomerations of individual buildings which compete against each other about attraction on the site (London Docklands). However, the criticism is equally related to a purely spatial control of large development units – as an outcome of centralized planning guidance through public-private agencies (Thornley, 1991) or as an expression of American influences on selling space by forms of “new urbanism” (Maak, 2000). On this basis, “co-operation” and “competition” are understood as possible expressions of a common strategy for innovative approaches to sustainable development to be set up by different participants during the process. “Co-operation” would be related to agreements between town planning, property development and users/ occupiers about contents of spatial qualities. This includes different forms of

cooperation among different levels of private and public administration. "Competition" would be the aim of such a co-operation for the qualitative outcomes of urban development, being related to the usability of site and area with effect on the legibility of town and region. The selected criteria for appropriate spatial qualities (permeability, variety, legibility, robustness, s. Bentley e.a., 1985) are regarded to be basic to such a strategy, because they are timeless and can be applied locally according to different policies. However, they contradict to a pure dominance of function and guarantee the integration of urban changes over time. Also, they support local economies as elements of sustainable spaces to live and to work.

The case study starts from the assumption that the dominance of function in the layout of existing urban conditions and also in its acceptance by ongoing policies is fundamentally working against any economic competitiveness of town and region. The assumption is based on positive examples of urban development in east and west Europe, where function does not dominate, either because of the duration of historical influences or because of a guidance of urban changes which has succeeded in saving "niches" for small-spatial development of different types. The assumption is also based on lacks of planning contents in form of the exploitation of land resources by settlements and roads in order to sell "natural" location advantages for housing. Such experiences of the author relate to east and west Germany and Great Britain during the last ten years. However, there is not yet much acknowledgement of these lacks, not even on international conferences about planning issues:

- Socio-economic conditions of information-technology on one side and of shadow-economies on the other side demand closer spatial links between the various fields of social and economic activities.
- Outstanding innovations in society and in the economy need undefined spaces which are appropriate to be occupied by initiatives to be established.
- Urban space still has to be given the chance to provide for working and living conditions with the option to "sell space" for the benefit of sustainable urban conditions.

The article pleads for qualitative criteria for urban development which would fill these gaps, well knowing that general criteria – especially those about "urban qualities" - are especially in east Germany rejected because of the past and present west German influences on the land market. However, the situation in east Germany is regarded as a huge challenge for Europe to regard both the sides of industrial urban development critically and creatively:

- The west German experiences of urban structure growth under capitalist conditions with a resulting increase of land prices and a final optimisation of land use density in built up areas – after decades of concentrating economic power.
- The east German experience of urban structure growth under "communist" conditions with a resulting decrease of land value and an over-offer of buildings and of land – after one decade of re-building the infrastructure of industry, social institutions and currently also housing under "capitalist" conditions.

## **2. Sub-urbanisation in east Germany**

### **2.1. Urban structure**

The situation of east-German towns has to be distinguished in principle from the situation of west European cities: Whereas west European towns are still strongly influenced by continuous urban growth around cores from different historical origins, east German towns implement urban changes of decline and renewal fragmentarily between sub-urban areas from different historical periods of planning. Waves of sub-urbanization have been introduced by planning from around 1950, at first under the influence of the centralized planning system of the GDR and from 1990 under influences of the federal system of the FRG.

Problems of industrial decline are equally reflected within the individual sectors of urban functions: industry, housing and transport. Therefore, these problems can neither in terms of reasons nor in terms of phenomena be compared with problems of industrial decline in west Germany. The much stronger separation of functions in east Germany has been reasoned by a chain of influences. The existing separation of the functional sectors had been based on "normal" processes of function separation in consequence of specializing and expanding urban functions from around 1910 to 1930. In addition to this, the planning of the GDR-regime from 1950 caused concentrating and specializing of functions. Most of these influences still affect the existing urban conditions in forms of either used or void sites of mono-functions (industry, military sites, agricultural land). From the middle of the 1990ies, changes of the economic system had started to influence the housing market. Financial support of single-family houses at the edges of towns and cities made those people move who had the choice. This did not change the mono-functional patchwork of the distribution of land from 1950, but added new zones of mono-function.

This way, the perforation of east German towns, caused by a systematic re-building of industry, increased the already existing amount of holes which had been caused by war-damages from 1990. The size of these holes corresponded to the size of mono-functional patches in urban areas (s. Wolfen-Bitterfeld). These processes were, however, only an introduction to much more comprehensive processes of migration which started in the middle of the 1990ies and still continue. These processes are merely related to younger people who follow either better opportunities for employment in west Germany or better conditions for living and working. They cause another series of holes in the urban structure, if and where concentrated housing areas fall derelict (s. Wolfen-Bitterfeld). Urban structure conditions have been left with the opportunities of a tremendous availability of land in inner and outer urban areas. However, new zones of housing on "greenfield"-sites are continuously established beside void spaces. Landscape tends to be accepted in inner urban areas, but is not given sufficient respect in outer urban areas.

### **2.2. Urban space**

Urban space reflects the patch-works of mono-functions especially by the distribution and character of public spaces. Whereas smaller towns and villages with origins predated the 1930s still show a very differentiated character of public spaces, big towns and cities like Dresden, show evidence of a dominance of the distribution of mono-functions and of a purely functional network of roads, especially in inner urban areas, having been established by re-construction from 1950.

Although ten years of “Aufbau-Ost” (renewing the East) have passed, there is still no evidence of a change of planning paradigm from the 1950s. Mono-functions in land use and similar types of high-rise housing estates determine the image of most of the urban areas which have been either established or renewed from 1950. By now, even the “most recently” established public space between building arrangements from around 1990 has maintained the representative and functional character of the GDR-times (front side, station in Dessau). Although sub-urban areas from the last 10 years have been created for more “privacy” (new buildings near the river Elbe, Dessau), the addition of houses and garages repeats the addition of patches, with only one difference: private land allows the government of car-traffic. Differentiated syntheses of private and public space have not been created since 1990.

However, the “garden-areas” represent a certain type of differentiated arrangements for private and public space. Whereas the area of single-family houses is normally restricted to a pure addition of private spaces, the garden “settlement” offers a spatial integration of private spaces into half-public and public space. Furthermore, the garden “settlement” implies the positive experience of an user-occupied plot with direct spatial connection between buildings and open space which can be used for various purposes without essential restrictions of use and built form and with very close neighbourhood connections. This way, the “garden-settlement” combines ideal conditions for a spatial and functional integration of local economies into urban situations and green spaces.

### **2.3. Changes in property ownership**

The lack of a change of paradigm in planning and in spatial patterns of urban structure and urban space since 1950 is regarded here as an uncertainty to overcome the dominance of western influences from 1990. This uncertainty may, among other reasons, be caused by the frustrating experience of GDR-citizens with rules about transferring land which had been nationalised by the German Democratic Republic and became transferred back to private ownership in the re-united Federal Republic of Germany (Häußermann, 2000).

- The restitution of private property to former owners is a very complicated procedure and prevents investment instead of speeding it up. The new owners of land in east-Germany do not know what to do with their new ownership and leave it to speculation. People from east Germany are restricted in governing the territory.
- The Investitionsvorranggesetz ('priority of investment law') gives priority to high capital investment in city centres if the city administration favours it relative to the restitution of properties. New owners are confronted to a 'second expropriation', before having had the chance to take part in governing the territory.
- Foreign capital from multinational joint-stock companies was encouraged by tax reduction for investment in east Germany. Most important sites were influenced by anonymous investment in office and flat construction.
- Even recently constructed flats have to be privatised by local housing co-operatives according to the “Altschuldenerhilfegesetz” ('old debts assistance law'). This law enables housing companies to reduce their debt by 50 per cent if they manage to sell 15 per cent of their housing units to present tenants. This is a paradox building up on the fact that the flats had been constructed by the GDR's budget, the debts had been created artificially by the Federal Minister of Finance of the FRG and the flats are actually sold to the long-term tenants a second time.

- Garden “settlements” which had been regarded as housing areas in GDR-times tend to be excluded from further actions of building housing. This reflects the west German understanding of “garden-areas“ in structure-plans as areas of exclusively green space, where settlement in terms of “development” would not receive planning or building permission.

The lack of a change of paradigm goes along with obsolete routines of social duties and their fulfilment in terms of a kind of "actionism" which is based on the socialistic rules of having to prove efficiency. This "actionism" finds expression in concepts and programmes for demolishing those buildings which have fallen derelict. Changes of property which result from such concepts relate to the "Altschuldenhilfegesetz". They imply perspectives for a decrease of the value of land falling from the value of built up land to the value of open space.

The costs for re-structuring these brownfield-sites have to be considered as well. As the housing agencies are hardly able to cover all these costs, new "owners" have to be found.

### **3. Case of example - Magdeburg- Buckau**

The case of a site in Magdeburg has been selected as it offers a chance to investigate a current process of urban development under conditions of economic depression. A public urban design competition had indicated interest in investment. The site is not only of major interest for the development of the immediate surroundings but implies the opportunities for developing new patterns of urban development with relevance for town and region. It represents an opportunity for an intervention into urban structure by small-spatial development in different zones. Its key-role for the development of urban space and urban structure is related to the possibility of a change of paradigm in the process of planning and property development.

#### **3.1. The challenge of the site**

The city of Magdeburg is the major city in the east German state of Saxonia Anhalt. The area of investigation is located near to the centre of Magdeburg which is most visibly pointed to by the main cathedral and by a huge public place north of it. The main road "Schönebeckerstraße", leads from South (village of Schönebeck) to North directly to this place and cuts the site of example in north-south-direction into an urban side with former industry behind to the west and a riverside with relics of former industry to the east. The site has the importance of an area where, if at all, urban development is supposed to start, primarily because of the advantages of the location within the city, and because of the variety of niches in urban conditions, open for integrated concepts for living and working.

#### **3.2. Problems and opportunities**

In contradiction to the centrality and the richness of the existing infrastructure (tram-line, public institutions), the site is characterized by derelict houses in a quarter of the last century and by empty shops west of the main road. It is adjacent to a beautiful landscape with relics of industry at the riverside, east of the main road. The urban context of the site is limited by the river in the east and by a planned road in the west is foreseen to take up traffic from the existing main road.

The existing main road has already experienced a post-war modernisation: the original course of Schönebeckerstraße, in its oldest part with buildings at the two sides, has received a bypass alongside the river which opens the view from inner areas onto the landscape of the riverside. However, this new part of Schönebeckerstraße does neither connect the landscape to the area nor separate it in a clearly defined way from the riverside. This is a problem in urban conditions which could easily be turned into an opportunity for defining the edge of urban areas towards the riverside.

The urban context is structured by an east-west-oriented street-grid of an the quarter of mixed use west of the road, with a centrally located but not yet spatially defined public place ("Thiemplatz") bundling the west-east connections between riverside and the old quarter. The riverside with a little harbour for boats and with a well demanded restaurant on a half-island build a completion of the individually unique situations of about four different types of urban areas within the site. Thus, even the small-spatial conditions offer a variety of opportunities to be worked on by integrative concepts. Specific challenges lie in different types of void land and in the reuse of empty buildings as well as in the structure of public places to be discovered and re-defined.

### **3.3. The approach of the local authority**

The public competition had been announced by the town planning department of the City of Magdeburg. Major goals had been to re-structure inner urban areas by linking the old quarter to the riverside and improving the conditions of open spaces.

However, in contradiction to these generally well acceptable goals, the definition of the task obliged the proposals to respect a legally binding plan, although this plan had not reached yet the stage of local law. It defines a green wall for noise protection alongside the post-war part of "Schönebeckerstraße". Also, it binds to a very loose arrangement of a small number of single-family houses along the riverside for which the noise protection is foreseen. These bindings counteract essentially to the opportunities of the existing urban conditions: Neither gets the edge of the town towards the riverside an opportunity to be defined spatially, nor can the landscape be spatially approached to the urban space. The road is accepted as a fragment without any importance for completing the structure of the city in this historically so important situation. The existing separation of functions (motor-car-traffic, housing for a few people in a privileged situation, public green space between housing) is continued. Furthermore, the very low density of a few houses alongside the river benefit from the location advantages whereas the public interest does not gain any benefit, neither in terms of wider offers to share the location advantages for new land uses nor in terms of a spatially defined improvement of public open spaces in the core and towards the riverside. The relationship between small- and large-spatial aspects of intervention has not been focussed on.

Consequently, the results of the competition do hardly consider small-spatial contributions to large-spatial aims for the urban structure. Links between the town and the riverside have not been worked on thoroughly. Enclosures of private housing arrangements and cul-de-sacs are hidden behind the landscaped wall. The land use of housing builds a second wall of private function behind this wall for noise protection with its double function of giving protection to the traffic-function on one side and to exclusive private property on the other side. There is no concept for linking public spaces. The existing public space, "Thiemplatz", has not been defined

spatially, neither by built form nor by trees; it has been opened by various concepts onto the riverside. One of these concepts completes the function of the road by establishing a huge public parking-space between "Thiemplatz" and riverside. Such a development can be called "American" in terms of a lack of spatial concepts and in terms of "selling space", purely for the purpose of function.

### **3.4. The approach of the students' project**

The students worked on the project by giving respect to the following premises: As urban changes happen under current conditions small-spatially, they have to be evaluated, guided and implemented over time, and have to be perceived by open frameworks. In order to fulfil these criteria, the students' projects had been oriented on using the selected criteria of structural spatial qualities (permeability, variety, legibility, robustness) in order to provide sustainable solutions.

The concepts provided a selection of possibilities for expanding land uses over time, if demanded, on the site and on the individual plots. Different densities of built form had been tested for different fields of built form to be developed on the site. Thus large-spatial aspects of the concepts became completed by different options for land use, especially for the lay out and use of open spaces relative to the arrangement of buildings. This approach resulted in proposals for units of built form and units of open spaces within differentiated arrangements of public, half-public and private spaces, always providing for a change of use over time. The contribution to the urban structure was defined by framework concepts for the main road, the post-war part of Schönebeckerstraße, and by definite solutions for the edge of the urban area towards the riverside. Nevertheless, links between the old quarter and the river Elbe opened the whole area for views and accesses towards the riverside. The differences of height had been taken as a challenge to model the transition from "inner" to "outer" spaces. The potential of public places was strengthened by enfolding a sequence of interlinked public places with different spatial qualities, relative to location and connection with bordering buildings. The difference of locations was worked on in order to create different characters and different identities for different parts of the whole area. Land use proposals offered working and living places in different forms of building arrangements and built form. Local economies were integrated by flexible concepts for built form within the individual units of plots.

### **3.5. Evaluation of the approach of the local authority**

Facts and factors of the process indicate some very essential lacks of flexibility in structural conditions and of accountability in the planning process.

#### **3.5.1. Patterns of urban development**

The officially provided patterns of urban development do not indicate any change of paradigm. The obsolete patterns of sub-urbanization have been continued as far as proposals for suburban development have been allowed to become parts of inner urban areas. The edge of the city has missed a definition which would have contributed to a better legibility of the shape of the whole town. Landscape and urban open spaces have not been distinguished. Furthermore, the dominance of traffic function has become supported by the "green wall" and by parking spaces in places where space could have been defined for the benefit of the public (legibility of individual places and of the riverside) and for the profit of property development (density of use at a central place). The "perforated city" has been taken as an excuse

for allowing a lack of co-ordination of small-spatial changes at a location which could have contributed to indicative changes of the urban structure.

### **3.5.2. Forms of co-operation**

The existing co-operation between the Department of Town Planning and the "Landesentwicklungsgesellschaft" had obviously excluded the discussion of alternatives. The decision for the competition and the restriction of the competition to accept the bindings of a local plan indicates the limits of a possible co-operation. The proposal of the author, to modify the conditions for the competition had been refused officially. As the location of the site is of major importance for the city of Magdeburg, bordering local authorities might have been asked to contribute to a regional strategy of development. But there are no indications for such a co-operation. Additionally, regular ways of public inquiry and of participation did not take place. Co-operation with other institutions are not known. However, private contracts about selling the land have been set up before the competition had been finished.

### **3.5.3. Understanding of competition**

The conditions of the urban design competition indicate that competition has not been understood here primarily as an aim to improve urban quality, neither in a local nor in a regional dimension. As the land use to be developed is restricted to a series of single-family-houses, competition has obviously been understood as enforcing the implementation of an already existing private interest in profit-making. The public interest has not been identified nor weighed thoroughly enough, and the public has been disadvantaged by enforcing the very specific kind of profit to be taken from the development of land in the proposed way. Disadvantages have been caused for the area and for the town in terms of an inadequate recognition of the opportunities to increase the public interest via small-spatial contributions to the urban structure over time.

## **4. Conclusions**

The phenomena of urban change which characterise the case show that neither new patterns in the economy nor in society and bureaucracy had caused "new patterns" in urban structure and urban space. Old routines of planning had become mixed up with new interests in land. Major tasks of guiding urban changes in east Germany are seen in avoiding a "Disney-like" modification of urban areas and, nevertheless, in involving the market in creating new patterns of urban development.

Flexible structures for integrating local economies and using spatial opportunities for building up well legible urban contexts are seen in locally specific decisions, discovering and strengthening new "nuclei" of a mixture of land use. New patterns of urban development, different from existing patterns in east and in west Germany, could be established. Strengthening the respective hierarchy of public spaces within town and region would increase the legibility of the urban structure alongside the network of main roads and places. Renewing land use at various locations would be an item of improving the usability of urban areas which would have to be related to the structure of public spaces and also to the setting of politically agreed aims.

The structural conditions in the FRG-planning system are a challenge for applying "planning gain" by various types of private contracts to arrange and to implement

agreements between property developer and town planning. The contents of such agreements would be bound to the needs of the purpose of development, would include a contribution to the wider context of the site for the benefit of the public interest and would also provide for the need to support specific aims of land use by financial support to the land taxation. As local authorities in the FRG have a very strong position in the planning system, such agreements depend on the willingness of the local authority to anticipate a strategy and to follow up a straight course of action. Although the local authority is bound to the implications of "Raumordnung" (RO-Klausel), this binding is relative to the principle of "counterstreaming forces" (Gegenstromprinzip). This principle enables the local authority in a dialogue with the regional government to make proposals in form of "bottom-up"-approaches. If the awareness about internationally binding aims of sustainable development has become integrated on the level of the community, this principle can be applied in a well accountable and also innovative way.

#### *New patterns of urban development*

The tremendous availability of land in east Germany is considered as a basis for new patterns. The natural and man-made advantages of the sites of the case imply the challenge to replace the western routines of optimising the density of use by space-building offers for different concepts of integrating open spaces and for long term mixed use on large plots within contexts of spatially defined areas. Such concepts would allow the definition of demands for the use of land over time, either individually or in groups, through collective choices within framing conditions. The framing conditions would have to ensure that the individual interests in urban development contribute to the public interest in the urban structure. This may mean to include seemingly contradicting options in order to ensure certain aims in the long term perspective: Concerning the still increasing dominance of motor-car-traffic, small-spatial solutions might be found which offer parking-spaces for contemporarily increasing demands but maintain the option of a decrease and a change of motor-car-traffic.

#### *Co-operation*

Co-operation of political and economic actors has to ensure that multi-level frameworks for guiding urban changes will provide for strengthening location advantages within the urban structure. It will have to control that urban contexts will not any longer be dominated by the influence of financial support of pure function within the sectors of property development. Such a co-operation will have to be built by close links between property developer and town planning on the level of the local authority. Different disciplines will have to be regarded in the development process (concepts and management of finances, landscaping, construction, technical and social infrastructure ...). A very early discussion about a common strategy of development will have to accompany the phases of research, of testing the feasibility of a project and of implementing plans and projects. The organisation of such a co-operation would have to fulfil the options of the principle of "counter-streaming forces" (Gegenstromprinzip). It would have to be guided by interlinked working groups on different spatial levels representing units of spatial and economic interests and controlling the outcomes of the process collectively. It would have to be initiated by those levels of planning administration, like ministries, who are more independent from the cycles of elections than politicians of local authorities.

## Competition

An alternative understanding of competition, different to the routines of attracting competing investors, would be related to common aims of planning contents. Competition would play a role as a qualitative aim of the spatial organisation of functions for building up local economies and supporting the economic competitiveness of the region. A “free competition” of market forces would be restricted by such concepts. The concepts would be elaborated by “workshop”-approaches, open for control and correction of conditions and results. Searching for “new” patterns would be pragmatic in terms of evaluating history in order to learn from it. Such an evolutionary approach of combined large- and small-spatial intervention would enfold more competitiveness than any repetition of obsolete routines.

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