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**Author:** Marek S. Szczepański

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**MAREK S. SZCZEPAŃSKI**

# **A "New Socialist City" in the Upper Silesian Industrial Region: A Sociological Case Study<sup>1</sup>**

## **1. Introductory remarks**

This text represents a kind of *post factum* summing up of the empirical research conducted in one town of Upper Silesian Industrial Region (USIR) in the years 1985—1990. Sociological research carried out in Tychy (see Fig. 1), was devised to:

- 1) describe the fundamental mechanisms, rules and principles governing the formation of a new socialist town in the border region,
- 2) record the social and cultural consequences of the functioning of these mechanisms, rules and principles,
- 3) record the feelings of the town residents regarding the conditions of life in a "new socialist town" and their level of identification with it,
- 4) prepare an overall diagnosis of the present condition of the town and to propose steps aimed at its revitalization.

Although these studies were carried out in only one town, the conclusions formulated from the results achieved would appear to have a more general and universal application. Indeed they may, with a certain caution, be taken as valid in all the regions of Poland.

The choice of Tychy was backed by a number of rational reasons. Firstly, Tychy is one of the most interesting examples of a "new socialist city", where the principles of construction and development resulted from more general principles of the political system. This city, *ex definitione*, was to serve as a model of how to solve the housing problem in socialism. Secondly, it is fair to say that Tychy was created from the grass roots in the border region,



Fig. 1. Tychy — geographical location; Poland — administrative division  
(a map made by Jerzy Bierwiazonck)

virtually entirely, in post-war Poland, hence the process of providing housing and attempting to create local communities can be traced in almost laboratory conditions. Thirdly, study of Tychy facilitates the reconstruction of a certain ideology and the principles of town-planning and architecture

designated as "socialist", in fact an unsuccessful modification of the ideology and principles of a capitalist city as in the Charter of Athens, the manifestos of the Bauhaus and De Stijl group.<sup>2</sup> Fourthly, the city is situated close to the Katowice — capital of an industrial conurbation and for some years has been treated as a satellite town. This simplifies studies on the finished unsuccessful attempts to deglomerate USIR. Fifthly, research on housing and relevant processes and phenomena has been conducted in Tychy from the very beginning, thus valuable research continuity is maintained, making comparison and confrontation easier and making feasible analyses of historical and genetic nature.

## 2. Tychy — town-planning ideology

The decision to create this city was of political nature, though it was justified by ecological, social and economic reasons. On the one hand, Tychy was to be a symbolic city, a materialization of new socialist principles of urbanization and architecture; on the other hand, it was to be an extension of USIR where shortage of space restricted further expansion.

The city was called into being by Polish Government on October 4th 1950. The creation and further development of Tychy was not the result of endogenic, town-creating factors, but was determined externally by the needs of USIR. To establish a satellite town was necessary in the 1950s because of the dramatic deterioration of living conditions in the Silesian Region, already suffering from:

- unacceptably high concentration of building and marked overcrowding of housing facilities,
- unfavorable mixing of residential housing with heavy industry,
- lack of satisfactory communal facilities in apartments (e.g. sewage system, water and gas supply),
- lack of proper transport and communications,
- heavy pollution of the natural environment,
- too few green areas (in 1960 there were 61 m<sup>2</sup> of waste land and only 7 m<sup>2</sup> of green lands per inhabitant of USIR).

The sitting of Tychy was by no means accidental. There were many reasons for those choices but the most significant were:

- short distance from the USIR capital — Katowice (about 17 km),
- good conditions for development of road transport, rail and road communication with the central part of USIR,
- central location relative to the southern part of the USIR,

— relatively good climatic and geological conditions (no mining damage, i.e. subsidence and spoil tips).

Before the localization of Tychy, the ideology and principles of town-building had been conceptualized. In spite of frequent assurances from the planners and politicians that they were creating a "new socialist city", both ideology and principles were obviously based on the modified Charter of Athens, i.e. the CIAM Charter. The most important modification consisted in assigning to the city, in the early 1950s, only two functions: housing and recreation. At first, these functions gained Tychy the name of the **big dormitory** of Katowice and other cities in USIR. In fact, the city planners wanted to create the elementary conditions for reproduction of the USIR workforce and bring in new workers from other parts of Poland. At that time USIR was already a "saturated system", and its further industrial expansion without territorial expansion and a system of satellite cities was much impeded. The building of Tychy was a further item in the general plan for rationalization and intensification of the exploitation of manpower and of raw materials (mainly coal) in the USIR.

The ideology shared by the Tychy architects and planners had a great influence on the city's shape, character and its housing. Bohdan Jalowiecki rightly condemned its consequences. "Brave new urban world — he wrote — promised by the prophets under the flag of the Charter of Athens, the Bauhaus and De Stijl, has materialized as amorphous urbanized areas, as housing remote from places of work and badly connected by the transport system, as prefabricated buildings — uniform, monotonous soulless architecture. It is not surprising that the urban revolution declared by order of a superior authority caused reactions of reluctance and protest. Since the theoretical patterns failed, we should pay more attention to man, trying to find out how he perceives, evaluates and adapts space in order to shape it on the basis of revealed human ideas and verbalized needs" (Jalowiecki, 1988). This general evaluation of Tychy and probably other cities built in compliance with the Charter of Athens, is very apt and the suggested therapy is still right and relevant.

Not only architects and planners were responsible to creating the city and its underlying ideology. The principal role, although not easy to identify, was played by regional and even central political authorities and the Upper Silesian industrial lobby. Their interests were explicitly stated, although very often expressed in general terms, making use of the hackneyed socialist phraseology. They envisaged merely the building of a city, or rather a set of urban blocks (districts), which would ensure the simple reproduction of the labour force at the lowest cost. The future local communities, their shape, and needs were not analyzed, though of course in the documents from those years we may read pretensions statements about the "new society", "urban socialist society", "social uniformity".

The building enterprises which implemented the plans and town-planning projects were of importance in organizing the social city space. Their urban practices led to minimization of costs, considerable uniformity of the buildings constructed, not difficult in conditions of module building and maximizing of effects and work indices (e.g. the cubic content of buildings). In this context a statement by the general planner of Tychy is symptomatic: "A dust bin, a sand pit, a playground for children, stairs, minor buildings" these one subjects which so far have been treated as "necessary evils". (Wejchert, 1957).

The native population played a marginal role in town-making. The Census of 1946 showed that the rural commune of Tychy had 12,056 inhabitants. At the beginning of the 1950s they tried to fight to maintain the urban form of Old Tychy, but this resistance was said to be irrational and was disregarded by regional political decision-makers. The preferences of the future inhabitants of the city were also of little importance. They were anxious to get an apartment since the majority of them, on moving to Tychy, stated that their housing conditions were critical.

The city plan and its spatial organization represented a specific compromise between the demands and expectations of the political authorities, the industrial lobby and the designs of planners and architects. This compromise manifested itself in various forms and it is not possible to write about all of them.

The Tychy planners realized that in creating "a new socialist city" from nothing, that spatial solutions adopted by them must influence the Tychy society. They decided that the developing town should be divided into relatively distinct urban bloks (districts) designated by letters of the alphabet. Together with these blocks they created new local communities. It should be stressed that in the beginning the mere fact of living in Tychy was the only factor linking the heterogeneous populations in the successively constructed districts.

### 3. Tychy — housing development

Initially a target population of 100 thousand was assumed. At the end of the 1960s a modification put the target population at 130 thousand. The general planner envisaged that Tychy would reach this number of inhabitants in 1980. In fact this figure was considerably exceeded and in 1980 there were 166,573 inhabitants and eight years later the population was 180 thousand (see Tab. 1.).

Table 1  
Population growth in Tychy from 1950 to 1989

Year (Dec. 31th)	Number of inhabitants	Rate of growth 1950 = 100
1950	12,927	100
1951	13,138	102
1952	13,883	107
1953	17,206	133
1954	21,077	163
1955	26,251	203
1956	30,786	238
1957	35,410	274
1958	40,625	314
1959	45,905	355
1960	49,950	385
1961	53,939	417
1962	56,564	438
1963	59,503	460
1964	62,439	483
1965	63,912	494
1966	64,804	501
1967	67,316	521
1968	68,440	529
1969	69,840	539
1970	71,177	551
1971	72,794	563
1972	74,860	579
1973	82,523	638
1974	no data	no data
1975	135,617	1,049
1976	139,684	1,080
1977	142,373	1,101
1978	154,093	1,192
1979	160,661	1,242
1980	166,573	1,288
1981	171,897	1,329
1982	177,563	1,373
1983	178,077	1,377
1984	181,833	1,406
1985	183,826	1,422
1986	186,211	1,440
1987	187,801	1,452
1988	188,200	1,455
1989	189,900	1,469

Together with the rapid demographic growth the number of settlements also grew. New districts were in the process of construction since 1951, and were designated by letters of the alphabet. At the same time these letters were

associates with girls' names, patronesses of these concrete housing units. For example, district M stands for Magdalena, X for Xymena, R for Regina, S for Stella, Z for Zuzanna, etc.

The first settlements, built at the beginning of the 1950s, were called logically after the first letters of alphabet, hence first came A, B and C, later — at the end of 1950s — came D, E, and F<sub>4</sub>. In the 1970s and 1980s were constructed M, N, H, H<sub>6</sub>, H<sub>7</sub>, O, P, R, S, U, W, Z, etc. (see Fig. 2).

The rate of multi-family block construction from 1951 to 1989 was varied. It is possible to differentiate four basic sub-periods. The first was in the 1950s with specially rapid growth between 1955 and 1958 when more than 1000 apartments were built every year. This number was the highest in 1956 (1552 apartments). During the second period, i.e. the 1960s, multi-family apartment building slowed down and only 500—600 apartments were handed over every year; the poorest result was observed in 1966 (only 270 apartments). In the 1970s, due to the development and modernization of two large coal mines "Piaś" and "Ziemowit", the Motor Car Factory and several other enterprises of high priority, the building boom began in Tychy again. At that time more than 2 thousand apartments were built every year, and the absolute record fell in 1977 (2,409 apartments). Following the Polish August 1980, the sudden economic breakdown was accompanied by the collapse of the multi-family block construction programme. In 1980 a total of 1943 apartments were handed over, in 1984 — only 998, in 1985 — 673, in 1986 — 584, in 1987 — 601, in 1988 — 302, and in 1989 not quite 300. Thus the present construction rate is only one quarter of that in the record year 1977.

In the 1970s numerous territorial administrative corrections were made and many nearby villages, settlements and towns were incorporated in the city boundaries. In this way the number of buildings, apartments and rooms in Tychy has rapidly increased. In 1972 there were almost 3,200 buildings, both old and new, and about 18 thousand apartments with 59,154 rooms. In 1980, after an unusual building boom and further corrections to the city boundaries, the number of apartments was 45,671 (149,003) rooms, and in 1985 — 51,817 apartments (170,454 rooms) in multi-family blocks.

In the Tychy building programme from the start strict standards of usable floor area, appropriate to various types of apartments, have been observed. Thus a room with a kitchen alcove, designated by the planners with the letter P, had a floor area of from 18 to 22 m<sup>2</sup>, a room and a kitchen (PK) — 28—39 m<sup>2</sup>, 2 rooms and a kitchen (2PK) — 41—50 m<sup>2</sup>, 3 rooms and a kitchen (3PK) — 51—58 m<sup>2</sup>. These were not over generous standards if we realize that the right to a room and a kitchen was granted to childless couples, a couple with at least one child could have 2 rooms and a kitchen, a couple with at least two children could have 3 rooms and a kitchen.



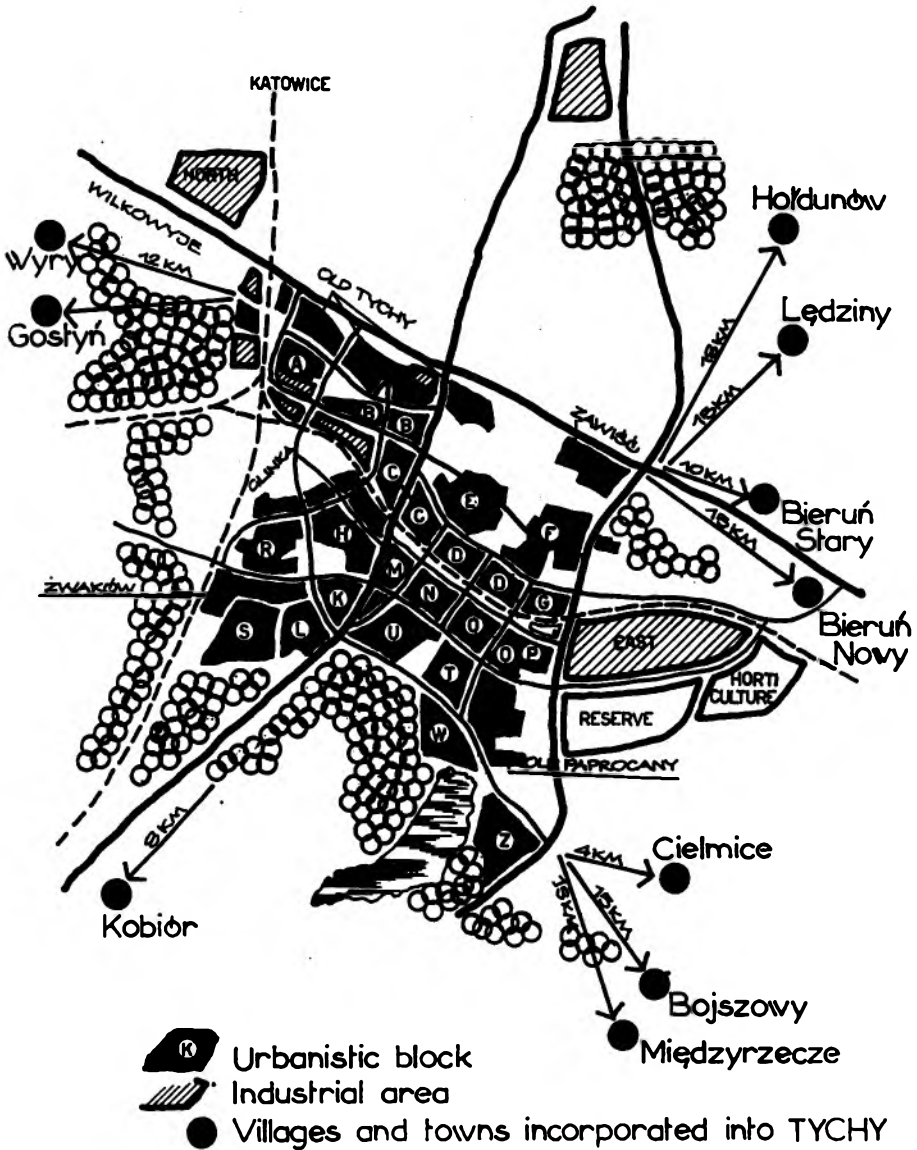


Fig. 2. Tychy — administrative division

(a map made by Jerzy Bierwiazonck)

Only in the 1970s some slight changes in standards were made and to each type of apartment was added several square meters of usable floor area. The limited range of these changes is indicated by the fact that the 3PK apartment — built in the 1970s — had 3—5 m<sup>2</sup> of usable floor area more than in the 1960s.

Similar changes were introduced in the lower category apartments. In the past decade a new type of apartment was built — 4PK (4 rooms and a kitchen) covering more than 70 m<sup>2</sup>, but it is allotted very rarely and on special grounds. They go to people whose professions are claimed to be particularly important for the city functioning. Such an ambiguous statement gives wide scope for corruption and free interpretation.

In spite of many efforts and certain achievements of the Tychy authorities in multi-family building, the housing problem in the city has not yet been solved. In 1987 there were 3,532 people waiting for apartments from the building cooperatives. This number included 203 members who had already been waiting for 7 years. Moreover, 5,323 candidates were registered as cooperative numbers for more than 10 years from the moment of paying the required deposit and becoming a certified member. In order to smooth over this unfavorable statistics, the city's main housing co-op "Oskard" has introduced new regulations. From 1981 they have made it difficult or even impossible to become a certified member of the housing cooperative. In this very clever way they have artificially reduced the number of members waiting for apartments and shortened the waiting time.

The city development was accompanied, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, by rapid development of "workers hotels". This was, and still is, the cheapest form of building and the simplest way to provide rooms and apartments for the semi-skilled and unskilled workers employed in the USIR mines and factories. Thanks to these "hotels" rooms and apartments, it is possible, at least to some extent, to stabilize the labour force and to limit its occupational and spatial mobility.

The first hotels were built in Tychy in the middle of the 1950s (1954 — the first hotel with 300 beds) and they were usually for 300—400 persons. In 1989 about 6 thousand workers were supposed to live in hotel and hostels: they lived in difficult conditions, in crowded rooms equipped with the simplest furniture. In the city there is even a whole district — "ghetto" in the sociological sense — called "Hotelowiec".

The development of workers' hotels is one of the most striking symptoms of segregation, both spatial and socio-occupational. What is more, separate location of workers' hostels is clearly related to processes of social stigmatization. The author's sociological researches have shown that the hotel dwellers are treated worse than the permanent city inhabitants. They are frequently boycotted (black-listed) in coffee shops or restaurants, they are quickly blamed for minor offences of theft, and even whole quarters are labelled with pejorative names (hotel scum area, hooligans area, etc.).

Along with the multi-family blocks and workers' hotels one-family houses were also constructed. Between 1951 to 1970 there were 763 one-family houses built with 3,530 rooms. Later the building rate varied, for example in 1975

— 103 one-family houses were completed, two years later — 243, in 1980 — 152, in 1984 — only 54, in 1985 — 110, in 1986 — 150, in 1989 — 132. On the average, between 1971 to 1986 there were 135 new one-family houses of different standards and different floor areas built. Finally, by the end of 1987 there were about 3,060 one-family houses and their average floor area was much greater than that of apartments in the multi-family buildings. No detailed statistics are available, but the Municipal Office estimates that the average floor area of family houses built in the 1980s considerably exceeds 120 m<sup>2</sup>.

It is of interest to note the social position of the owners of one-family houses. In this aspect the selection and segregation processes are the most clearly distinguishable. In the first place, the building of one-family houses, which is very costly, is located in regions with special ecological advantages. The most elegant and desirable housing, as far as architecture is concerned (e.g. parts of Tychy-Czulów), is occupied by higher administrative-political or technical personnel, people of the learned professions, rich craftsmen and market gardeners.

#### 4. The social consequences of town-planning solutions

It appears from the official documents that the city planners were aware of the social consequences of the spatial solutions applied in Tychy (i.e. division of the social space into relatively distinct urban blocks, large housing units, etc.). "Experience gained from observation and random questioning — wrote one of them — showed that the division into structural units undoubtedly has organizational values: for administration, technical — for complex supply of public facilities, and spatial — for clear shaping of compositionally fixed spatial units. However, the social values which were once the basis of the conception of the housing estate community, that is social ties, were not found" (A d a m c z e w s k a, 1962).

It would seem that solutions adopted were intended primarily to facilitate urban administration and technical commissioning of the successively built units and also to produce a compositionally fixed space. They did not anticipate, however, the stimulation of the processes of social integration and creation of compact local societies living in the blocks and housing units.

The creation of urban space in line with the Charter of Athens, separating place of work from place of residence, creating quasi-autonomous urban units, everyday work-home travel, was bound from the very beginning to lead to social disintegration of urban community. In Sjoerd Groenman's concept

of the "empty zone" he stresses the lack of individual and collective identification with the space of big housing estates, together with hypertrophic orientation toward the family and apartment space (Groenman, 1965).

The building of big urban housing blocks, or indeed large, loosely connected housing units was not conducive to forming a compact spatial and social organism. The urban centre was intended to have a significant influence on shaping such an organism, to be the source of identification and identity of the Tychy inhabitants. The general planners were also convinced of this creative role of the centre. "Real cultural, social and friendly relations — it was written — may be established later, often on the basis of a cultural centre and schools" (Adamczewska, 1962). In the case of a new city, location of this centre was specially important for the development of community life. The centre was to be "[...] not only the element organizing the given space but it was also to order people's behaviour and to structuralize the social life of the community" (Jałowiecki, 1988). The centre in a new city could be the sphere of political power, a symbol of city power, of strength and wealth, almost a holy space.

In spite of this important role of the centre in creating a new urban society, it may be assumed that in Tychy the planners did not have any developed conception for the city centre. In fact, the city centre moved together with the construction of further districts. Initially, it was moved to the region of The Old Market and Baczyński Square (block B), then it was moved to the region of Aleja Bielska (blocks B and C) and later to the intersection of two main streets of the new city, Aleja Niepodległości and Stefan Grot-Rowecki Street (block D — see Fig. 2). Stefan Kurowski, the eminent Polish economist, states that the centres of Polish cities more and more frequently become the intersection of communication lines (Kurowski, 1987). In the case of Tychy they are only internal city lines, but much traffic on them disorganizes the "centre" and makes movement difficult. What is worse, the "centre" which should be the symbol of the "power and strength of a city" is very largely empty, covered by relatively extensive green areas. Of course, in Silesian conditions it is difficult to overestimate the advantage of these green areas, but it is questionable whether they should rightly be sited at the intersection of the main streets which is said to be the "centre" of the city.

In West European culture the centre of the city determines its character. Perhaps the oriental tradition can serve to understand the case of Tychy better. In this tradition it sometimes happened that the city centre was a virtually empty area, inhabited only by the ruler and his suite. This characteristic spatial separation is still present in Tokyo. The centre of this agglomeration, partly empty, is occupied by the imperial buildings. With some exaggeration it may be said that there is a similar situation in the central part of Tychy. It is very

largely empty while the imperial buildings are replaced by the monumental buildings of the city offices and the political parties.

The lack of a clearly defined centre and problem in its location actually hasten the disintegration of urban housing blocks communities and isolates them even more. A solution could be the creation of local mini-centres in particular areas, providing, at least to some extent, a nucleus for integration of inhabitants of these areas. But this has not been done in Tychy except for minor developments as in districts K and Z.

This failure to create a centre means also failure for the spatial town-planning conception, called by the planners "centrifugal composition". "The plan arrangement — as one of them wrote — should create possibilities of centrifugal composition, unlike the plan of a city in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance conforming to the rule of concentricity".

A city without a centre, plus lack of infrastructure normal in post-socialist Polish conditions, becomes merely a loose collection of large housing estates which even the inhabitants call "socialist dormitory", "a city with no character", "a bedroom in a socialist style", "an unshaped city", "deserts", "workers' lodging house for Silesia" (Szcze pa ń s k i, 1989; Szcze pa ń s k i, 1991).

Planning that restricted the creation of local communities within the city could have been partly counteracted by natural movements and tendencies in the particular districts. But here there was no scope for spontaneous development. The Tychy planners aimed for "a finished, new form of a socialist city" (A d a m c z e w s k a, 1955), leading to a city of uniform and facelessly egalitarian architecture. Uniformity, so characteristic for the Charter of Athens, the De Stijl group and the Bauhaus, in Tychy took a particular form. Not only the housing and population standards were laid down, but also the parameters of a "module", from which the city districts were created. It was arbitrarily established that Tychy should have at the beginning 100, later 130 or even 300 thousand inhabitants; should occupy 800, and then 600 settled hectares, that the thickness of prefabricated interior walls should be 20 cm, a crane should make 8 movements per 100 m<sup>3</sup> of cubic content, the cost of 1 m<sup>2</sup> of accommodation should not exceed 1,900 zlotys, etc. Needless to say these standards and assumptions were often avoided. Closer analysis of them provides convenient material for the study of the totalitarian character of town-planning and architecture of that time. This totality was also manifested in the organization of space underlying social egalitarianism and restricting individual behaviour and activities. Collectivism and a module — these two paradigms, the obsessions of total architecture were not, however, the idea of contemporary exponents of the Charter of Athens. They may be found in famous De Stijl and Bauhaus' manifestos. By the way, we may observe that building a city out of prefabri-

cated modules resembles the *bricolage*, described by Claude Lévi-Strauss. From the same "blocks" we can create different but, in fact, virtually identical forms.

## 5. The social space and local communities

"Creation of a city — wrote Augustyn Bańka — always means creation of a culture, that is individual and collective patterns of behaviour" (Bańka, 1985). It also, and perhaps most importantly, involves introducing new social organisation, new local communities. Under favourable circumstances these may develop into relatively integrated local societies. Well planned and created social space may accelerate such a process. In Tychy, for various reasons, there are still inefficiently organized territorial communities, where the constitutive, and often the only common feature is its location. Hence we cannot speak of a city which is compact entity. It is rather a forced "federation" of districts, situated within artificially delineated city borders and controlled by the same administrative authorities. Initial empirical studies show that knowledge of local topography among city inhabitants is very poor, particularly as regards the incorporated rural areas (e.g. Bojszowy, Hołdunów, Gostyń) and suburban districts (R, T, W) are concerned. The borders of those blocks are rarely crossed, even in a symbolic sense. Quite frequently they fulfill the criteria of natural areas as in the tradition of the Chicago School in urban sociology.

Physical crossing of these borders is also impeded due to insufficient transport facilities. For the inhabitants of the suburbs going to the "centre" of Tychy is a long trip because of large distance (on March 31th 1991, the area of Tychy was 271 km<sup>2</sup> and distances from outlying parts to the center were: Bieruń Stary — about 10 km; Międzyrzecze — about 15 km, Bojszowy — about 15, etc.). It is not surprising that people from the more remote districts have poor relations with the city and in some cases even demand formal separation and restitution of previous territorial and administrative arrangements. An example of such "separatism" on a local scale may be the case of Bieruń Stary, formerly a small town, in 1975 incorporated in Tychy by a decision of the Polish Cabinet.<sup>3</sup> This decision was closely connected with the building of the Motor Car Factory near Bieruń Stary. The feelings and expectations of local people were not taken into consideration.

The unique conditions in which the city and its numerous parts were created, the wide differences between the urban blocks and the old districts, former towns and villages arbitrarily incorporated during successive administrative reforms — mean that analysis of mutual relations between the city and its communities should be preceded by a few general remarks. The various types of city areas, differently influencing the lives of their

territorial communities, need to be distinguished. Four criteria are proposed:

- the age of the districts,
- spatial location in relation to the geographical city centre,
- social organisation,
- degree of implementation of the site planning scheme (blocks and completely finished districts, districts and areas still under construction).

Accepting such criteria we may distinguish in the city area the following spatial and social subsystems:

- the so-called Real Tychy,
- suburban districts,
- the so-called Old Tychy and older settlements, villages and towns, once independent and now located within the city border.

## 6. Real Tychy — the social space and local communities

The term "Real Tychy", often used by planners, refers to an area closed by the four main city streets (see Fig. 2). Here are located districts C, D, E, O, N, partly M and F. Construction of this part of the city is completed and only minor local building is found (e.g. modernization, the so-called gap-building). Real Tychy was created in the 1960s and in the beginning of the 1970s as the nucleus of the new city. These are the most developed areas in Tychy, here are the main business and service facilities, offices of the administrative and political authorities and the biggest city park.

As in other parts of the city, its population is heterogeneous due to their culturally and socially differentiated origins. Most inhabitants came from USIR and nearby areas (the Częstochowa Industrial Region). In some urban blocks, however, are found relatively homogeneous communities, repatriates from the Soviet Union (district C) or migrants from more remote Polish provinces.

Thus the heterogeneous population of Real Tychy had differentiated cultural capital, traditions and social customs. The only integrating factor was the space of urban blocks. However, spatial (physical) proximity does not necessarily lead to social proximity or closeness of neighbourly relations. This may grow from working contacts, common educational background, etc., participation in various unions, clubs and associations, in spontaneous or organized forms of relaxation and entertainment, in cultural activities and social life, etc. In Tychy these functions were ignored. As in the Charter of Athens work places were widely separated from living places, both in Real

Tychy and throughout the whole city. Time which people might spend on spontaneous or organized activities or participation in culture was, and still is, wasted on arduous commuting. Long distances to travel to work in USIR cities and distant suburbs of Tychy means that free time is seriously shortened, especially with the absence of private cars. Another factor limiting social contacts and relationships, in spite of spatial proximity, is lack of symbolical space facilitating interpersonal contacts. From the very beginning Tychy has been grossly under-invested as far as cinema, clubs, cafes, restaurants or recreation areas are concerned. This is the case even in Real Tychy, although this is the principal, representative area. There is no common cultural identity, little or no individual or collective participation in cultural activities. This is undoubtedly related to the original designation of Tychy as a dormitory town for Katowice, the policy of cheap, economic building followed in the 1960s and 1970s together with the usual infrastructural deficiencies.

Empirical studies show clearly that degree of identification with the city of Tychy residents is relatively low. Only two persons out of 100 questioned see Tychy as "home", the source of identity and a reference system. For most Tychy is only "an episode in their life", "the place where they live", "a temporary place", "the symbol of the lack of stabilization". Twenty-five persons would have left the city immediately if they had been offered a flat in the place where they were born, in the previous place of residence or anywhere outside USIR (Szczepański, 1991). This feeling of loose identification with the city may have considerable impact in the future, hindering the formation of integrated local communities. This low degree of identification results in indifference to local affairs. In Real Tychy, in the 1990 local municipal election interest was so slight that it was deemed socially alarming by the local press.

## 7. Suburban districts

This name is given to the housing districts located outside the "Real Tychy" at varying distances from the geographical city centre such as districts built in the 1970s (R, U, W) and 1980s (P, Z, S, X). Tychy block areas, just as large settlements in other parts of the country, are deficient in infrastructure facilities and the available services and shops are very limited. An extreme example is unit R (Regina) with population of about 5,000, with one small food shop and a little infants' nursery which occupies a few standard apartments. There are no cultural centres, clubs, restaurants, bars, cinemas, primary services, etc. The transportation conditions are difficult and getting to larger shops in the geographical city centre takes quite a long time, adding to the



time wasted by commuting. In these conditions, although not characteristic only for Tychy, it is difficult to speak of community feeling and neighbourly ties. What is worse, in suburban areas the centre part is often organized quite irrationally, e.g. for vast car parks (units R, U). The lack of local shops and services space is compensated by concentrating everyday activities in the real Tychy and other USIR cities, in which most of the Tychy inhabitants work. This transfer of activities away from the place of residence favours social anonymity and cutting off of the home environment. This anonymity is sometimes overcome when groups of people working in the same factories or enterprises, live in the same urban units. In this situation, however, there is a danger of creating social structures resembling professional ghettos. Residents complain of constant surveillance by neighbours and co-workers, growing numbers of rumours and gossips, transferring of hierarchic relations from place of work to the settlements. The scale of these problems was revealed in interviews with workers from the Motor-Car Factory living in part of settlement H.

From the sociological point of view the activities of inhabitants of infrastructurally neglected areas can be interesting. The feeling of constant deprivation leads them to collective revindication, contesting behaviour, most often ineffective and chaotic (e.g. the boycott of local meetings in settlements R and U as a protest against municipal policy and lack of facilities).

## 8. Villages and towns incorporated into Tychy

As the result of constructioning high-rise block areas, a few more exclusive settlements and one-family house developments, available space in the city has greatly diminished. In this situation it was necessary to make administrative decisions about incorporating further areas into city. The authorities decide to adopt the simplest and cheapest solution, and by arbitrary decisions taken in 1955, 1967, 1972, 1973, 1975 and 1977 they incorporated several villages (e.g. Urbanowice, Jaroszowice, Cielmice) and also towns (Bieruń Stary, Łędziny). Incorporated areas are usually less developed with greater infrastructure neglect than the main parts of the city, with which the functional and spatial connections are weak. These towns and villages are several kilometres from the main city, and transport facilities are extremely bad (e.g. Gostyń — 12 km from Real Tychy has 1 infrequent bus service line; Międzyrzecze — 15 km with 1 infrequent line; Wryy — 12 km with 2 very infrequent bus line).

The status of these incorporated areas has changed very little and they still maintain their provincial town character (Bieruń Stary, Łędziny) or rural

character (Cielmice, Wilkowyje), cultivating historical spatial forms of traditional activities. They remain local societies,<sup>4</sup> clinging to their separate identity. Not so long ago Wry — now a suburban district and previously an independent town — celebrated its 700th anniversary. Historical consciousness, accepted axiological and normative systems and conviction of the “parasitical” role of real Tychy serve to strengthen the feeling of separateness and autonomy.

The process of integrating the so-called “Old Tychy” with real Tychy is much more advanced or even finished. Before a “new socialist city” was created, there was a town here, whose history is closely linked with two nearby breweries: “Książęcy” and “Obywatelski”. The topography of Old Tychy is characteristic, several narrow streets with old buildings, a small market square and an old church with a few buildings of historical interest. The Old Tychy residents protested against the plan to build a new city, appealing to regional and central administrative and political authorities. They claimed that the town-planning scheme would destroy irrevocably this provincial spatial and social arrangement. After joint inspection of the area with the regional authorities their claim was allowed and Old Tychy was incorporated into the “new socialist city”.

## 9. Conclusions

Using various sociological methods and techniques in these studies on the Tychy local urban communities, certain conclusions may be drawn. From the very outset the Tychy population was predestined to social and cultural disintegration. This situation was worsened by the insufficient transport connections, lack of a real commercial centre in the town, infrastructural neglect and the scarcity of places of informal social contacts (e.g. coffee houses, restaurants, cinemas, theatres, etc.). The people inhabiting the concrete blocks, the local communities *in potentia*, found in the environment the planners had created nearly nothing to favour community trends, aspirations or motivations. The spatial organisation certainly facilitated administration but the resulting overinstitutionalization was not conducive to the growth of lively social contacts. Where the standards and doctrines were relaxed, neighbourly social bonds developed and true local communities began to emerge. It is alarming that the majority of the Tychy residents interviewed in our sociological investigations see no chance of ever feeling strongly bound to the city, to think of it as “home”, the frame of reference, the source of identity.

It is the duty of town planners to anticipate the needs and activities of the future residents and to create a flexible spatial and organisational framework. But to claim that everything can be planned and designed, forgetting the unpredictable human element, is a myth invented to aid manipulation, a myth that is drastically called in question by study of the Tychy reality.

The basic aims of the investigations carried out in Tychy have been achieved. The broad empirical material collated is currently serving as the foundation for the preparation of an overall report on the condition of the town and draft proposals for improving living conditions of the town's residents. The new municipal authorities have appointed three interdisciplinary groups (architects, economists, sociologists, ethnographers) who are preparing alternative projects for changes to be made in Tychy. To a certain degree they rely on our research and conclusions, summarised in the report published by the Warsaw University (Szczepeński, 1991). Nevertheless, it would seem to be expedient for these sociological studies in Tychy to be continued. These new studies should focus on:

- 1) factors stimulating social initiatives by the residents themselves aimed towards improving the conditions of life in the town,
- 2) factors promoting social participation in the change processes initiated in the town,
- 3) factors facilitating social and cultural integration of the urban population.

## Notes

1. Different methods and techniques were used in the studies on various aspects of housing and local communities in Tychy. Among the most important of them were:
  - secondary interpretation of the results of sociological, demographic and economic studies conducted in the city in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s,
  - analysis of the plans showing housing development in the city and of the reasons for creating housing units,
  - questionnaire surveys dealing with various aspects of housing, conducted among representative adult inhabitants of the city (in 1986 — 100 interviews, in 1987 — 66, in 1988 — 399, in 1989 — 33, and in 1990 — 19).Questionnaire studies were conducted by final year sociology students from the Silesian University, specially trained both theoretically and methodologically for this project. To enable comparison, similar studies were carried out in three other towns of Upper Silesian Industrial Region as well as Tychy, i.e. Dąbrowa Górnicza, Ruda Śląska and Siemianowice. Interviews were conducted as from 1985 but the greater part were implemented between June and August 1989. Detailed information on research results, methods and techniques employed, is given in the book by M. S. Szczepeński (1991).
2. The Charter of Athens (Fr. Charte d'Athenes) was prepared during the sessions of IV International Congress on Modern Architecture (Fr. Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture

Moderne — CIAM) which was held from July 26th to August 13th 1933. The authors of the document based on town-planning experience and results of experiments from 16 countries worldwide and 33 towns. This of course refers to experience from capitalist towns and countries, and the Charter of Athens was designated to serve as the foundation for future spatial reconstruction in the conditions of this political system.

The Charter catered for a triple function of the town. It was meant to guarantee the best possible conditions of housing, leisure-recreation and employment. Correct functioning of the town and its three principal zones (residential, leisure-recreational and employment) — spatially separated — was to be made possible by a dense transport and communications system. It was the efficiency of the transport system that governed implementation of the particularly important postulation contained in the Charter, i.e. the clear separation of the industrial areas from residential districts. In these latter — declared the authors of the Charter of Athens — use should be made of new techniques for the erection, from prefabricated elements, of loosely sited, high-rise and cheap residential buildings, and in this way urban ground would be freed for organisation of extensive green areas.

CIAM, the Bauhaus (founded in Germany in 1919 by Walter Gropius and abolished by the Nazis in 1933) and the De Stijl group (set up in the Netherlands in 1917 by Theo Van Doesburg) are recognized as the principal institutions and organisations co-creating the so-called “modernist architecture”.

3. On January 26th 1990 the Municipal National Council in Tychy, with only a few abstentions, officially decided to declare a new division of the town and new delineation of its boundaries. Thus was concluded the first stage in complying with the postulations of the inhabitants' autonomous councils and local citizens' committees from the small towns, villages and settlements in the past incorporated into the “new socialist city” and currently demanding dismantling of “greater Tychy”. In their place there are now six administrative units:
  - municipal community of Tychy (the so-called real Tychy),
  - municipal community of Bieruń,
  - municipal community of Lędziny,
  - village community of Bojszowy,
  - village community of Wry,
  - village community of Kobiór.

This crucial decision for the whole city was accepted by the Provincial National Council in Katowice on April 27th 1990. On August 28th 1990 it was also approved by the newly elected Municipal Council in Tychy, chiefly members of “Solidarity” (“Solidarność”). The Council called for local referenda to be held in the districts who wish for independence. These were arranged in September 1990, and the residents taking part unanimously supported the separation plans.

4. Local (territorial) communities are in fact local societies *in potentia*. Local societies are characterized by a high level of organization, community of interests and activities, distinct awareness of separateness and explicit territorial assigning. These features, in the case of local communities, are usually not quite shaped.

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