CITIES OF LOS ANGELES

Mariusz Twardowski
Ph.D. Eng. Arch., Assistant professor
mt@twardowskiwokan.pl
+48 602218174
Chair of Urban Composition, Institute of Urban Design
Faculty of Architecture, Cracow University of Technology
Warszawska 24, 31-155 Kraków
a-32@pk.edu.pl
+48 126282022
+48 126282022 (F)

Key words: Los Angeles, city centre, polycentrism, housing, public spaces

Abstract

The world capital of the movie industry does not keep up with the world capital of business when it comes to the application of urban planning solutions. Los Angeles and New York are poles apart, to say the least, as far as their cityscapes are concerned. New York is the essence of a high-density city, whereas the metropolitan area of Los Angeles is a group of several cities scattered over a vast territory, each with its own small centre. The climate is different, the lifestyles are different and so are the paradigms of the two urban schools. If there are any similarities, they may be found in the environmental approach gaining popularity in both cities, as people have realised they do not really want to spend more than one-third of the day in their cars commuting. The article discusses the phenomenon of the L.A. metropolitan area – a polycentric city covering the area of 12,500 square kilometres, and the Los Angeles County – a nearly mythical city composed of small mythical units.

Introduction

The city is one of the oldest and probably the most perfect civilizational achievements, judging from the fact that it is continuously perfected and still irreplaceable. It is disputable whether Robert Park is right in his belief that it is the most successful endeavour humanity has ever undertaken in transforming the world.[1] It is, undoubtedly, the most effective endeavour and at the same time – practically irreversible: "*creating the city, humans have transformed themselves.*"[2]

Contemporary urban study considers the phenomenon of the city to be more of a process than a closed and defined form, yet urban designers do not cease to seek model solutions or define new paradigms. Los Angeles was supposed to be one of such models: the urban embodiment of post-Fordism, a model of an American post-modern city of the late 20th and early 21st century,

---

[1] Robert Park, *On Social Control and Collective Behavior*, Chicago 1976, p. 3, cited after: Harvey (2012), p. 21.
[2] *Ibidem*

an alternative to the metropolitan hustle and bustle of the hyper-dense Manhattan[3]or to gentrified centres surrounded by slums and/or monofunctional areas of low-density housing development, a city built as much for people as for cars, a city growing on the greatest riches of the contemporary world: oil, show business and new technologies.

Metropolitan Los Angeles / the Greater Los Angeles Area[4]

Metropolitan Los Angeles comprises 88 cities of very different development densities and demographic characteristics. The total area of this cluster of cities amounts to 12.5 thousand square kilometres, which is roughly equivalent to the area of Silesian Voivodeship. However, Silesia is inhabited by 4.6 million people, whereas the population of Metropolitan Los Angeles was estimated by the census of 2014 to be 15.5 million.

Figure 1. A bird's view of Los Angeles: we can see the road network and the area densely parcelled-out into small lots, with the dominant single-family development. Total absence of vacant lots and generally accessible recreational areas is visibly striking

Source of photo: author

Los Angeles with its appendages is the second largest city in the United States and the fifteenth agglomeration of the globe.[5] The Greater Los Angeles Area, i.e. the actual, administratively

---

[3] See *inter alia*: David Halle, Andrew A. Beveridge, *Changing Cities and Directions: New York and Los Angeles*, University of California On-Line Working Paper Series, p. 2, http://escholarship.org/uc/item/6pk1047j#page-2, as of the 28th April 2016

[4] Metropolitan Los Angeles: approx. 13 million inhabitants, area: approx. 12,500 km^2, density: approx. 1,000 persons/km^2; The Greater Los Angeles Area: approx. 18.5 million inhabitants, area: approx. 87,500 km^2, density: approx. 200 persons/km^2, http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/SEX255214/0644000,06037, as of the 6th March 2016

[5] After: *Major Agglomerations Of The World* [in:] Thomas Brinkhoff, *City Population*, www.citypopulation.de/world/Agglomerations.html, as of the 6th March 2016

marked out area affected by the agglomeration, stretches over 88,409 square kilometres[6] (an area only slightly smaller than Portugal) and encompasses urbanised as well as non-urbanised regions, which explains the drastic difference between the population densities of both organisms.

The special character of this polycentric agglomeration results precisely from the heterogeneity of the small towns and big cities of which it is comprised – from the flat, vast 4-million Los Angeles with its wide roads, orthogonal layout and a dense cluster of skyscrapers, to numerous medium-size cities, to small recreational towns (Malibu, 13 thousand inhabitants) or the least populated of all – industrial Vernon (114 inhabitants).[7] Connected with one another with a dense road network (including motorways), the cities within the Los Angeles agglomeration create a grid of so-called *edge cities*.[8]

The edge city – a term popularised in the 90s of the previous century as it was used in the also popular book by Joel Garreau of the same title – is a city built from scratch (*in cruda radice*) on previously undeveloped land as a result of rapid urbanizing processes, similar to classic suburbs, yet offering more jobs than beds as well as large office and commercial spaces (a structure typical of a post-Fordian city); it is – which is extremely important – perceived as a separate entity, although still co-dependent on the central city, in this case – the City of Angels, people and cars.

Los Angeles[9]

Figure 2. The skyline of Los Angeles

Source of photo: author

The history of Los Angeles started with the arrival of Spanish Conquistadors in this area. A Franciscan Mission was established here in 1781,which became the centre of an urban

---

[6] In 2015, after: *Discover Los Angeles*, http://www.discoverlosangeles.com/press-releases/facts-about-los-angeles, as of the 6ᵗʰ March 2016
[7] All the statistics come from *American Fact Finder*, United States Census Bureau, Washington, 2015
[8] Joel Garreau, *Edge city: Life on the New Frontier*, New York: Anchor Books, 1991
[9] Los Angeles: approx. 4 million inhabitants, area: approx. 1,300 km², density: approx. 3,200 persons/km², http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/SEX255214/0644000, as of the 6ᵗʰ March 2016

settlement. In 1821, the city went under the Mexican control, and following the Civil War, together with the whole California, it was annexed by the USA.

Oil deposits were discovered in California towards the end of the 19ᵗʰ century, yet the growth of the city really kick-started when the transcontinental railway was launched into operation and an aqueduct was built to supply mountain spring water to it. From that moment on, the growth practically only accelerated, propelled by the mining industry, transportation (two sea ports, three airports), the entertainment industry and their accompanying construction boom and the post-Fordian consumption.

Figure 3. The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, designed by Rafael Moneo, 2002; and the W. Disney Concert Hall, designed by Frank Ghery, 2003
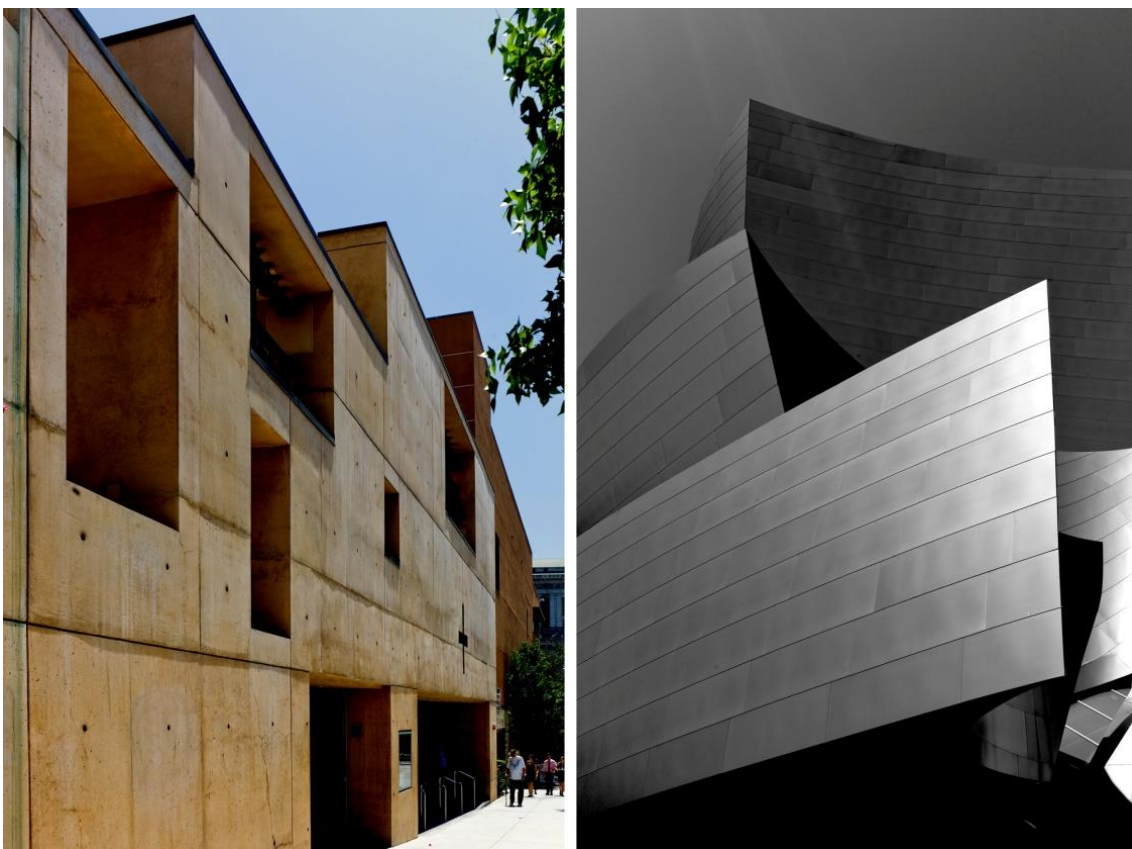
Source of photo: author

The growth of the city was observed by humanists and public life commentators, who – at the turn of the 19ᵗʰ and 20ᵗʰ century – highlighted the extraordinary character of the city. The city was called "a great exception" since it was different from all the other cities in the United States in that it had a great variety of immigrant communities. However, besides the above opinions, there were also other, claiming that Los Angeles was built on aberration and deviation from what is normal.[10] The processes transforming the social and spatial structure were discussed in

---

[10] Robert M. Fogelson, *The Fragmented Metropolis: Los Angeles, 1850-1930 (Classics in Urban History)*, University of California Press; Revised Edition, Los Angeles 1993, p.12

"*Society and Space,*" which was devoted to the phenomenon of the city.[11] Edward Soja described the city as "*a sprawling urban region*" and "*prototopos.*"[12]

Figure 4. Central Los Angeles High School 9 for the Visual and Performing Arts, designed by CoopHimmelb[l]au, 2008; Caltrans District 7 designed by Thom Mayne, 2005

Source of photo: author

Los Angeles is the city of eternal *now* or eternal *never*, flat and open, to be traversed in one's car rather than with the use of public transport, never on foot. Downtown – the only part of the city with dense development – stirs to life in the morning, at lunchtime and when people leave work. After dark, empty streets between skyscrapers make a rather depressing impression and they are not a very safe place.

The district, which acquired a typically office character in the 70s of the 20th century is now, as far as possible, being complemented with facilities related to culture and entertainment – museums, concert halls etc., which are to attract people into the centre. These projects are not infrequently icons of architecture: Museum of Contemporary Art designed by Arata Izosaki (1986), Walt Disney Concert Hall designed by Frank Ghery (2003) or the Broad – a new contemporary art museum – designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro (2015). Some other structures that stand out against the background of the prevailing office development are the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, erected in 2002 to the designs by Rafael Moneo, following the earthquake which had destroyed the previous building, the new seat of the L.A.P.D. (design by: Roth Sheppard Architects, AECOM, 2009) and the headquarters of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans District 7, design by: Thom Mayne of Morphosis, 2005). This last building presents a different approach to the category of iconicity in the context of the city. As declares its designer, *"The outer layer of the double façade delaminates from the body of the building-functioning like the car body to protect and shield its inhabitants via a constantly shifting*

---

[11] *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 1986, Vol. 4, no 3
[12] M. Dear, S. Flusty, *The resistible rise of the LA School*, [in:] M. J. Dear (ed.), *From Chicago to L.A. Making Sense of Urban Theory*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks 2002, p. 9

mechanical skin of perforated aluminium panels that alternately open or close depending on the sun's angle and intensity. Appearing to be windowless and opaque at midday, the building transforms in appearance over time until it reaches near complete transparency at dusk."[13]

Figure 5. The high-rise designed by Gensler, 2010; New Carver Apartments designed by Michael Maltzan Architecture, 2009

Source of photo: author

The cityscape described above is composed not only of single-family houses or low, arcade-like apartment buildings, with the only contrasting element being the skyline of the strict centre (downtown). The prices of building lots in the best locations in L.A. may not be as exorbitant as the ones in New York, Tokyo or Hong-Kong, but they still induce developers to choose ever more vertical forms. One of the examples of a high-rise residential building is the apartment tower delimiting the city skyline from the south designed by the Gensler office, specialising in commercial building projects. This is the first high-rise residential building completed after 1992, when the Erickson California Plaza was built.

At the turn of the 20ᵗʰ and 21ˢᵗ century, the Los Angeles School[14] declared Los Angeles to be a prototypical post-modernist city. It has become an archetype of a multilingual, polycentric and multicultural place.[15] The researchers have concluded that the urban design of the city with its ever more distinct polycentricity constitutes a ground-breaking change in the hitherto prevailing understanding of city spatial structures. However, Los Angeles has also become a city stripped of any spatial symbolism.[16] New neologisms and terms[17] are being sought now to try and describe what Los Angeles is (and how different it is from other cities in the world).

---

[13] Thom Mayne, *Caltrans District 7 Headquarters*, [in:] www.morphopedia.com, as of the 5ᵗʰ March 2016

[14] At a conference in Lake Arrowhead in 1987, representatives of the University of South California (USC) and the California State University in Los Angeles established a group of scholars called *the Los Angeles School*, whose main fields of study are deindustrialisation and reindustrialisation, crisis of the national state and the emergence of e-economy.

[15] M. J. Dear, *The Postmodern Urban Condition*, Blackwell Publisher 2000, pp. 17-21

[16] Comparable to the towers of New York and the Boulevards of Paris.

Culver City[18]

The oldest traces of human presence in the area of Culver City come from 10 thousand years ago. However, the town was established in 1913 at the site of a former Civil War military camp. It was here that the first movie studio (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) was founded in 1924 as well as the first Californian *shopping mall* – soon after the Second World War.

Figure 6. 3535 Hayden; the Beehive, designed by Eric Owen Moss, 2001

Source of photo: author

Culver City, although the name does not ring so many bells as Beverly Hills, is famous for its artistic district (Culver City Art District), and to architecture lovers it is known for its numerous structures designed by Eric Owen Moss. Tens of the structures, from office buildings to assembly shops, designed by this "master jeweller of junk," as he was referred to by Peter Johnson,[19] demonstrate how usability may harmoniously coexist with a unique, sculpture-like architectural form.

Culver City is a town without a single high-rise tower. All the public utility buildings – offices, shopping centres or movie studios – have horizontal proportions, and the few solitary residential structures which are several storeys high (e.g. the six-storey MODAA apartment building of 2005, designed by SPF) are grossly outnumbered by single-family development.

Pasadena[20]

Although Los Angeles is associated primarily with the entertainment industry, it is also an important centre of science. California Institute of Technology (Caltech) is one of the most important centres of research into seismic phenomena. The academic standards here are so high that, if the popular opinion is to be trusted, a half of the American Nobel prize winners is or

---

[17] E.g. *flexism* referring to the flexibility and changeability of the city
[18] Culver City: approx. 40 thousand inhabitants, area: approx. 13 km2, density: approx. 3,000 persons/km2, http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/SEX255214/0617568,0644000, as of the 5th March 2016
[19] *Architectural Monographs* No 29: *Eric Owen Moss*, Academy Press, 1993, p. 12
[20] Pasadena: approx. 140 thousand inhabitants, area: approx. 60 km^2, density: approx. 2,400 persons/km^2, http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/SEX255214/0656000, as of the 1st Feb. 2016

have been affiliated with the Institute. The same could be said about the city – Pasadena is all about university campuses and research centres. The one that stands out from among them is the Cahill Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics. This extremely plastic building has been designed by Thom Mayne. The shape of the building is the architectural interpretation of a cycle of forces which – bumping into one another – create unique spaces. "*As one moves through the space, formal fragments coalesce to reconstruct the interactions among light, architectural elements, and bodies as physical traces of the institution's new ideas.*"[21]

Figure 7. The Cahill Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Caltech, designed by Morphosis, 2008

Source of photo: author

Pasadena, established in 1886, stands out from among the other cities of the agglomeration because of its old – given the local conditions – historic centre spared from destruction in the earthquake of 1992 (7.3 in the Richter's scale). The centre features buildings remembering the 20s of the 20th century, when Pasadena was a popular tourist resort both of the recreational and cultural character. Although the Great Depression had left a strong mark on Pasadena, after the 2nd World War, the city – with the population of 90 thousand – was considered one of the best and friendliest cities to live in.

---

[21] Thom Mayne, *Cahill Center for Astronomy and Astrophysics at Caltech*, w www.morphopedia.com, as of the 1st Feb. 2016

Beverly Hills[22]

The first houses on the hills of Beverly were built along the main trails (the present Wilshire Boulevard) as early as in the 60s of the 18th century. The first hotel was founded here in 1912, and in the next decade Beverly Hills became a fashionable place among film stars, who started building their residences here. No information about social or economic problems is ever to be found in the local papers – Beverly Hills lives in its own world, following its own rules. For the first time in the century-old history of the town its inhabitants had to act as a community when the permanent transportation paralysis had made it clear that the plan to connect Beverly Hills with the centre of LA with an underground line had to be given serious consideration (it was accepted after tempestuous discussions and public consultations).

Figure 8. Boutiques in Beverly Hills; Kate Mantilini restaurant designed by Morphosis, 1986

Source of photo: author

The inflow of rich people interested in owning a house next to show business stars has slightly changed the look of the neighbourhood. Nowadays, the greatest stars tend to move to Santa Monica or Malibu (the more avant-garde go for Venice) and the development in Beverly Hills is getting denser than ever before. However, the most prestigious commercial address is still Rodeo Drive, where shoppers can visit a boutique designed by Rem Koolhaas (Prada) or Antonio Cittero (De Beers), and then have lunch in a restaurant designed by Morphosis (Kate Mantilini). The few office towers look as if they are here by mistake and the regular daily work that gets done each day in their interiors is somehow out of character of Beverly Hills. The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) designed by Renzo Piano gives the equally out-of-place impression.

---

[22] Beverly Hills: approx. 35 thousand inhabitants, area: approx. 15 km², density: approx. 2,300 persons/km², www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/SEX255214/0606308, as of the 6th March 2016

Figure 9. LACMA designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, 2008 - 2012

Source of photo: author

Venice[23]

Officially, Venice was established in 1905 as a seaside resort situated slightly over 20 km away from Los Angeles. At about that time, the land and hotels owners started building canals and a pleasure pier, with an auditorium, a restaurant, a dancehall and a scenic railway line. The population, which in 1910 amounted to little over 3,000 inhabitants, soon grew to exceed 10,000, with 50,000 to 150,000 tourists coming to the town at weekends.

Figure 10. Bay Cities designed by Mark Mack, 2001; the Boardwalk in Venice,

Source of photo: author

In 1926, Venice was formally annexed by the Los Angeles County and continued to expand its tourist infrastructure, streets and canals. The Great Depression took its toll on the city, marking a period of decline and although oil was discovered in the area still before the 2nd World War, land prices were dropping and a growing number of houses stood vacant. Low property prices soon attracted immigrants and young artists. Crime rates were rising, but at the same time the

---

[23] Venice: approx. 41 thousand inhabitants, area: approx. 8 km², density: approx. 5,100 persons/km2),
http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/neighborhood/venice/, as of the 6th March 2016

city was stirring back to life. The Beat Generation era became the *founding myth* of contemporary Venice, which, having undergone gradual gentrification, is now an LA district of a cult status, inhabited by the artistic elite, who prefer a loft apartment over a residence with a pool. Hence, the city is characterised by unusually dense development – as for Los Angeles – and it features structures such as Ecochic Venice Loft Homes designed by R&D Architects (2007) or Bay Cities Lofts (2001) and AB/BRO (2007) by Mark Mack.

Figure 11. The Chiat Day Office Building by Frank Ghery, 1991,

Source of photo: author

The image of Venice would be incomplete without the throbbing with life seafront boardwalk or – of equally cult status as the district itself – the Chiat Day Office designed by Frank Ghery (1991). This was the first design project in which Ghery applied his future trademark, i.e. folding metal façade surfaces, and it secured him a place in history of architecture textbooks.

Santa Monica[24]

The settlement of Kecheek, which has been replaced by current Santa Monica, had existed long before the arrival of Spanish Conquistadores. In the second half of the 19th century, i.e. only a century after the events of the Spanish Conquest, the city already had a masonry town hall and an operating railway line. Santa Monica, similarly to Venice, soon became a tourist resort and felt acutely the pinch of the Depression in the 30s. Hotels went bankrupt and corruption was spreading into all aspects of public life as only a thousand people in the city actually did have jobs. The economy boost came with the opening of the aircraft manufacturing plant. During the 2nd World War, Douglas Aircraft Company provided employment to 44 thousand people.

---

[24] Santa Monica: approx. 93 thousand inhabitants, area: approx. 22 km^2, density: approx. 4,300 persons/km^2, www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/SEX255214/0670000, as of the 6th March 2016

Today, Santa Monica, with good road connection to the other parts of the metropolis, provided by the cult Route 66 and the ring-road built in the 60s, is more of a tourist resort than an industrial centre. More "urban" than other cities of the agglomeration, it is also one of the most expensive. The basic development type are small single-family buildings and low office and commercial buildings located on smaller lots than is customary in the neighbouring towns. For example, the Ocean Breeze designed by Atelier V (2009) is an apartment building with 20 apartments of approx. 60 m^2.

Figure 12. Step Up Fifth, 2009; Lofts at Cherokee Studios, designed by Pugh+Scarpa, 2001

Source of photo: author

Santa Monica features several interesting examples of more environmentally aware architectural designs. The roof and the southern façade of Colorado Court by Brooks + Scarpa Architects (2002) are clad with photovoltaic panels (the excess energy is sold to the municipal electricity supply grid), and the façades of the Lofts at Cherokee Studios by Pugh + Scarpa (2001) have been designed to actively limit the amount of light and heat entering the interior of the building. The same office realised the experimental design project Step Up on Fifth – 46 flats for elderly, homeless and intellectually disabled people. The residents of the building remain under 24/7 care, they have access to medical care and physiotherapy. Semi-transparent panels on the façade allow the residents of the building situated along the street frontage to have the minimum privacy, while they do not separate them entirely from the street outside.

Figure 13. Civic Center Parking designed by C. Moore, Ruble, Yudell (2011); the wide beach in Santa Monica,

Source of photo: author

Santa Monica has no shortage of public utility buildings, there are the Sony Music Entertainment Center designed by Steven Ehrlich (1992) or the municipal library by Charles Moore (2006), just to name a few. It is significant, though, that the landmark of the city is a multi-storey car park. The structure, designed with equal assiduity as office or residential buildings, is, nevertheless, much larger. The car park is a popular meeting spot and a viewing point – the terrace of the roof café offers splendid views over the Pacific and the city panorama. One cannot fail to see the structure, especially after dark, when – powered by photovoltaic cells – it glows with all the colours of the rainbow.

Malibu[25]

Malibu is one of the youngest and the smallest of the "prestigious" cities comprising the Los Angeles County (it was incorporated in 1991). The turning point in the rather turbulent history of the town, which started as an Indian settlement named Chumash, went on to become Spanish ranch land and later on an industrial town (famous for the manufacture of ceramic tiles), happened in the 70s of the previous century. The local community succeeded in blocking construction of an atomic plant, a motorway which was to run along the coast and a sewer network collective main pipe, and thus they managed to preserve the picturesque landscape with low density of development. It is here, in Malibu, where Pritzker prize laureates design residences for the world's richest people.
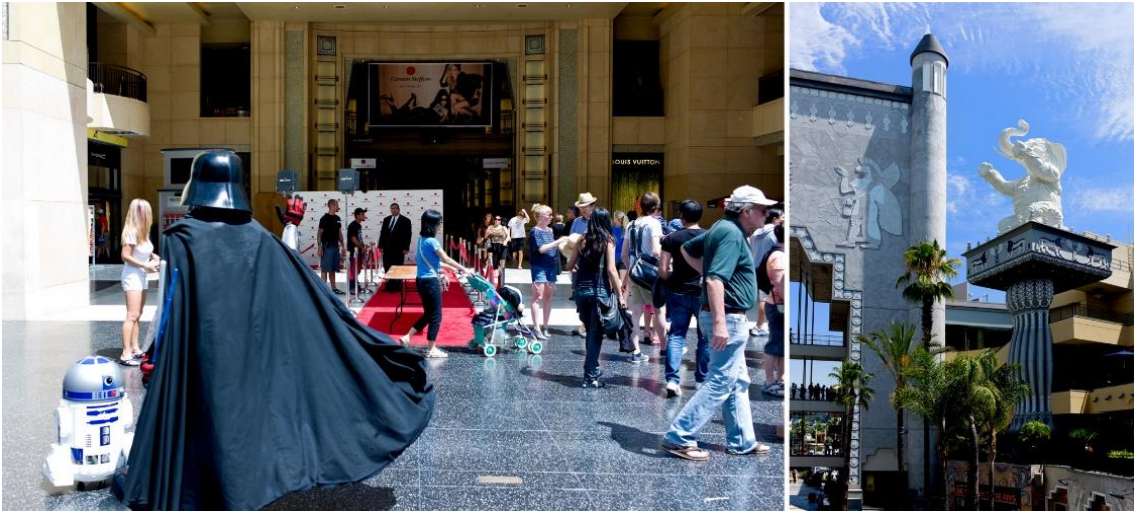
Hollywood[26]

The beginnings of Hollywood go back to the mid-19th century. Half a century later, the small farming settlement had the population of no more than 500. Soon, linked with a single-track tramline to the neighbouring Los Angeles, already boasting the population of 100,000 inhabitants, it became the capital of the movie industry for purely financial reasons: everybody

---

[25] Malibu: approx. 13 thousand inhabitants, area: approx. 51 km², density: approx. 250 persons/km², http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF, as of the 6th March 2016
[26] Hollywood: approx. 85.5 thousand inhabitants, area: approx. 9 km², density: approx. 9,500 persons/km², http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/0684410, as of the 6th March 2016

who was interested in movie making was running away to the West Coast to avoid paying high royalties for using Thomas Edison's patented inventions. Hollywood, which was cheap and with good transportation links and from which it was easy to flee to Mexico, should the Patent Office drop in for inspection, was simply a perfect place.

Figure 14. Lord Vader among tourists outside the Dolby Theater; development in Hollywood Boulevard,

Source of photo: author

The first stationery movie studio was founded in 1911 and others soon followed. The famous white slogan was put up on the slope of Mount Lee in 1923. Although, over time, movie studios were built outside Hollywood as well, it seems that still the only things allowed into Hollywood are the ones which are somehow connected with show business. Obviously, apart from the tourist industry which has been spun off by the Dream Factory.

Figure 15. The Disney Feature Animation Building designed by Robert A. M. Stern, 1995; Michael D. Eisner Building designed by Michael Graves, 1990,

Source of photo: author

Hollywood is not only the Walk of Fame or the Dolby Theater hosting the annual American Academy Awards ceremonies. Although one may find it hard to believe, given the large number of film characters strolling leisurely in the streets or the Disney's studio of 1990, designed by Michael Graves, with its tympanum supported by 6-metre-tall dwarfs, this fairy-tale façade hides an "ordinary" city, with the metropolitan population density index, with traffic jams, rubbish, air pollution and loads of common, daily-life problems.

Figure 16. Formosa 1140, designed by Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects, 2008; Pacific Design Center by Ceasar Pelli, 1975, 1988, 2011,

Source of photo: author

Conclusions

The areas of the city are arranged in a way resembling a chessboard. Although the cities described above are neighbours, they grow individually, without any significant functional links. This model of a city spatial structure has been defined by Michael J. Dear as mosaic capitalism (keno capitalism).[27] The growth of a metropolis in its contemporary urban form is tremendously affected by globalisation, accumulation regime, transformation of the economy from Fordian into post-Fordian and pro-environment policies undertaken by its municipal authorities. Such model of city growth, although praised by members of the Los Angeles School, has its opponents, who claim that the city centre is no longer attractive in the sense of focusing all the vital aspects of public life, but instead it has turned into a centre of business, financial or information services. The metropolis has spun off multi-centre metropolitan regions. Areas of low population density have been interspersed with those of high density, and centres of local politics are still competing with one another.[28]

Los Angeles is not composed only of office towers and culture centres frequented by people living in remote, luxurious suburbs, who come here in their cars driving wide roads. Among the

---

[27] M. J. Dear, *Imagining Postmodern Urbanism*, Blackwell Publisher 2000, pp. 88-91.
[28] M. Gottdiener, *Urban Analysis as Merchandising: The "LA School" and the Understanding of Metropolitan Development*, [in:] V. Sarapik, K. Tüür (eds), *Koht ja Paik/ Place and Location*, Tallinn 2003, pp. 157-168.

88 cities comprising the agglomeration, there are also ones whose hallmark will be the serious crime rate rather than contemporary architecture. In spite of such deep social divisions, infrastructure inefficiency, enormous administrative area and the serious threat of numerous possible natural disasters (droughts, wild fires and earthquakes),[29] Los Angeles seems to be surprisingly resilient.[30] Diversification of the local economy grants the city greater stability – six years after the great crisis of 2007/2008, which was also felt in California with its enormous real estate market, the labour market in LA flourishes again and the GNP is 1% higher than the national average. If we add to it the close presence of the best schools in the world (Pasadena), the advanced technologies industry (Culver City), beautiful views (Malibu), wide beaches (Santa Monica), cult artistic districts (Venice), a little vanity (Beverly Hills) and the movie industry, the inconveniences of a 2-hour drive to work or having to drive to a place where you may jog will seem irrelevant to many. Especially so since the ban on watering house gardens and filling private swimming pools has slightly narrowed the gap between the richest and the poorest inhabitants of the largest "polycity" in the West Coast.

Los Angeles also attracts architects. American cities are fairly young, apart from regulations related to height or size of buildings, there are practically no limitations imposed on designers. At the same time, it becomes discernible that more attention is being paid to ecology and pro-environmental issues. Living in an apartment in a multi-family building is no longer a sign of an insufficient financial status. Both the cities comprising the County of Los Angeles and the ones making up the agglomeration itself are of an ever more polycentric character and they do not gravitate towards one centre. Their diverse characters, which may become focal points for the growing identities of edge cities, as well as the absence of the traditional magnet, which are, in other equally big cities, e.g. seats of State administration, are undoubtedly important factors affecting the functioning of this agglomeration. Agglomeration in which "city within a city" does not necessarily mean a huge hybrid complex.

References

Architectural Monographs No 29: *Eric Owen Moss*, Academy Press, 1993

Changing Cities, Area No 100, 2008

Cities within the County of Los Angeles, County of Los Angeles, Los Angeles 2015

Davis M., *The City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (1990), new edition: Verso, 2006

Davis M., *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*, Metropolitan Books, New York 1998

Dear M. J., *Imagining Postmodern Urbanism*, Blackwell Publisher 2000

Dear M. J., **Flusty** S., *The resistible rise of the LA School*, [in:] M. J. Dear (ed.), *From Chicago to L.A. Making Sense of Urban Theory*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks 2002,

---

[29] See *inter alia*: Mike Davis, *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster*, Metropolitan Books, New York 1998.

[30] Resilience, including resilience of a city, means the ability of a system to preserve its basic functions in spite of the factors causing disturbances in its operation. The term, originating in the field of physics, is used in psychology, psychiatry and in the study of social systems. After: A. Porębska, P. Rizzi, *Resilient City* [in:] Future of the Cities – Cities of the Future, J. Gyurkovich et al. (eds), CUT Press, Kraków 2016, p. 126.

Gottdiener M., *Urban Analysis as Merchandising: The "LA School" and the Understanding of Metropolitan Development*, [in:] V. Sarapik, K. Tüür (eds), *Koht ja Paik/ Place and Location*, Tallinn 2003

Gyurkovich J., *Architektura w przestrzeni miasta. Wybrane problemy*, CUT Press, Kraków 2010

Gyurkovich M., *Hybrydowe przestrzenie kultury we współczesnym mieście europejskim*, vol. 438 Monograph (Cracow University of Technology), Series: Architecture, CUT Press, Kraków, 2013

Halle D., **Beveridge** A.A., *Changing Cities and Directions: New York and Los Angeles,* University of California On-Line Working Paper Series

Harvey D., *Bunt miast*, transl. A. Kowalczyk, W. Marzec, M. Mikulewicz, M. Szlinder, Fundacja Nowej Kultury Bęc Zmiana, Warszawa 2012

Hawthorne C., *Architecture Review: The Tower At L.A Live* [in:] *Los Angeles Times*, Los Angeles 13 Oct. 2010, http://articles.latimes.com/2010/feb/13/entertainment/la-et-lalive-tower13-2010feb13

I**sozaki** A., *Architecture With or Without Irony 1985* [in:] David B. Stewart,.*Arata Isozaki: Architecture 1960-1990*, Rizzoli, New York 1991

Jacobs J., *Śmierć i życie wielkich miast Ameryki* (1961), transl. Ł. Mojsak, Centrum Architektury, Warszawa 2014

Kosiński W., *Kreowanie środowiska mieszkaniowego - spełnienie wspólnotowych marzeń* [in:] *Architektura mieszkaniowa*, CUT Press, Kraków 2009

Last Piece of L.A. Live Opens – Ritz-Carlton, Los Angeles [in:] *ENR California*, 16 April 2010 http://california.construction.com/california_construction_news/2010/0416_RitzCarltonLA.asp

Lefebvre H., *Le Droit a la Ville*, L'Homme et la Societe, 1967

Lynch K., *Obraz miasta* (1960), transl. T. Jeleński, Archivolta, Kraków 2011

Major Agglomerations Of The World [in:] City Population, Thomas Brinkhoff, Oldenburg 2016, www.citypopulation.de/world/Agglomerations.html

Mayne T., *Caltrans District 7 Headquarters*, www.morphopedia.com

Montaner J. M., *New Museums*, Princeton Architectural Press, 1990

Park R., *On Social Control and Collective Behavior*, Chicago 1976

Porębska A., **Rizzi** P., *Resilient City* [in:] Gyurkovich J. & others (eds.), *Future of the City – Cities of the Future*, CUT Press, Kraków 2014, pp. 115-128

Revolutionary buildings [in:] *The Economist, Technology Quarterly*, www.economist.com, 2009

Theories and Manifestoes of Contemporary Architecture, Ch. Jencks, K. Kropf [eds], Chichester, Wiley-Academy 2004

This is Hybrid, An Analysis Of Mixed-use Buildings, Publisher A+t Architecture Publishers, 2014

Węcławowicz-Gyurkovich E., *Architektura najnowsza w historycznym środowisku miast europejskich*, Kraków 2013

Woodehouse L., *Architecture Since 1945*, Kinko's, Knoxville 1992, *World Population Review*, http://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/los-angeles-population/

Figures

Fig. 17. A bird's view of Los Angeles: we can see the road network and the area densely parcelled-out into small lots, with the dominant single-family development. Total absence of vacant lots and generally accessible recreational areas is visibly striking. photo: author

Fig. 18. The skyline of Los Angeles, photo: author

Fig. 19. The Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels, designed by Rafael Moneo, 2002; and the W. Disney Concert Hall, designed by Frank Ghery, 2003, photo: author

Fig. 20. Central Los Angeles High School 9 for the Visual and Performing Arts, designed by CoopHimmelb[l]au, 2008; Caltrans District 7 designed by Thom Mayne, 2005, photo: author

Fig. 21. The high-rise designed by Gensler, 2010; New Carver Apartments designed by Michael Maltzan Architecture, 2009, photo: author

Fig. 22. 3535 Hayden; the Beehive, designed by Eric Owen Moss, 2001, photo: author

Fig. 23. The Cahill Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Caltech, designed by Morphosis, 2008, photo: author

Fig. 24. Boutiques in Beverly Hills; Kate Mantilini restaurant designed by Morphosis, 1986, photo: author

Fig. 25. LACMA designed by Renzo Piano Building Workshop, 2008 – 2012, photo: author

Fig. 26. Bay Cities designed by Mark Mack, 2001; the Boardwalk in Venice, photo: author

Fig. 27. The Chiat Day Office Building by Frank Ghery, 1991, photo: author

Fig. 28. Step Up Fifth, 2009; Lofts at Cherokee Studios, designed by Pugh + Scarpa, 2001, photo: author

Fig. 29. Civic Center Parking designed by C. Moore, Ruble, Yudell (2011); the wide beach in Santa Monica, photo: author

Fig. 30. Lord Vader among tourists outside the Dolby Theater; development in Hollywood Boulevard, photo: author

Fig. 31. The Disney Feature Animation Building designed by Robert A. M. Stern, 1995; Michael D. Eisner Building designed by Michael Graves, 1990, photo: author

Fig. 32. Formosa 1140, designed by Lorcan O'Herlihy Architects, 2008; Pacific Design Center by Ceasar Pelli, 1975, 1988, 2011, photo: author