

Parking Regulations and Urban Development – Poznań’s Case Study

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1 ABSTRACT

No matter if at home, at work or on shopping, they are always around us: the parking places. Yet, surprisingly little attention has been paid to their impact on our cities. That is perhaps because they tend to be treated as a part of the respective properties (housing projects, office parks, shopping centers etc.), and not as elements of urban structure per se. Yet, it is a parking policy what still is an important tool for the development of mobility. On one hand, the proximity of parking places to home has got a strong influence on the choice of means of transport for everyday journeys (Knoflachner 2007). On the other, parking policy in the city center may discourage from (or encourage to) a car trip to the downtown. It is the most important "element of the push-and-pull strategy" (Topp, Pharoah: 1994). However, any limitations in access to parking space usually face opposition, as there exists a quite widespread opinion that people have a „right” to free parking. To apply this argument consequently would mean that the basic principles of urban economics do not apply to parking space. In fact, there is much evidence that free parking tends to negatively affect the functioning of the entire local economy. Shoup (2005) puts the argument right: free parking or free markets.

We approach the problem with a case study method, using the city of Poznań as in-depth case. Motorization has been on the rise in Poland in the last years, and it seems that public authorities are not able to deal with increased demand for parking, save for turning public space into space for cars. On the other hand, cities in Western Europe have been experiencing mass motorization for decades, and some of them have developed policies based on regulating parking space, which may also mean reducing supply, if necessary.

Beginning with an overview of the legal and institutional framework, we then follow to examine the parking policy, truly – the lack of an efficient parking policy – on two examples: of the city center (especially the development of a paid parking zone and its influence), and of a large housing estate (functional changes, pressure on green areas, changes in urban structure etc).

2 BACKGROUND

Poznań is one of the oldest cities in Poland. It takes the fifth place in terms of population (551,627 inhabitants in 2010), and the fourth in terms of industry and university education. It is also the capital of the Wielkopolska Voivodeship. Since the 19th century the city has belonged to the richest communes in Poland. Poznań has got a relatively extensive system of public transport: normally, the city is served by 19 daytime tramway lines (mostly in 10’ frequency), one night tramway line (30’ frequency), 54 daily bus lines (usually in 12’-30’ frequency), and 21 night bus lines (mostly in 30’ frequency). Yet, the number of passengers has been slowly but systematically falling down (see fig. 1). Simultaneously Poznań has been witnessing increasing motorization. At the end of 2010 there were 525 cars per 1000 inhabitants, which was one of the highest motorization levels among Polish cities. Hence the streets of Poznań are under strong motorization pressure.

There are various reasons for the regress of public transport. Obviously the social factors play a role (keyword: post-socialist “fascination with automobile”), but there are other serious problems at the city level. The most important of them is an inappropriate network of public transit connections. Many important destinations are located far away from fast, high-frequency lines. The most spectacular example is the new university campus, which is attended by several thousands of students everyday, but does not have a tram connection. The same problem applies to new high-density residential areas. In general, the network is adjusted to old urban structures, e. g. to former heavy-industry areas, and not to the present trip matrix (see: Gadziński, Beim 2010; Radzimski 2010).

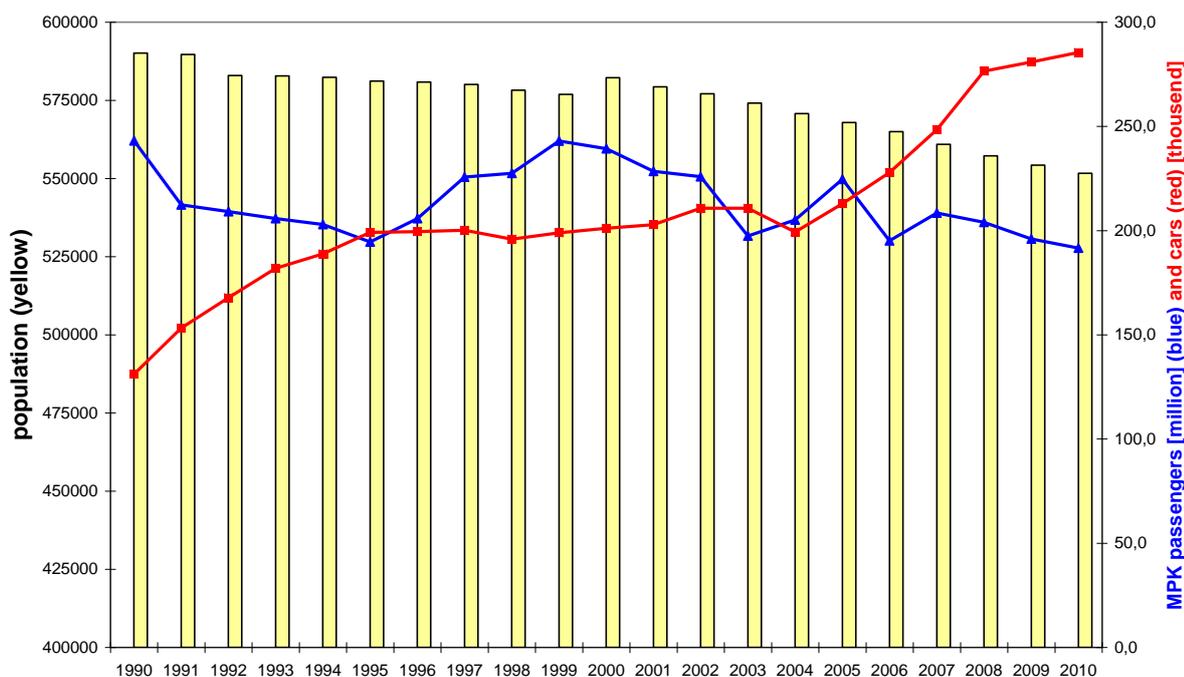


Fig. 1. Urban public transit passengers (MPK), number of cars, and population of Poznań between 1990 and 2010. Source: own compilation based on Polish Central Statistical Office (GUS).

Traffic situation has been worsened by the process of suburbanization. Since 1990 significant changes in urban development and living preferences have been observed (see: Beim 2009, Radzimski at al. 2010). Mostly due to migrations to the suburbs the city has lost about 35,000 inhabitants during that period. At the same time the population of surrounding communes (in Poznań County, powiat poznański), has risen sharply by about 95,000 inhabitants. In effect, at the end of 2010 there were 327,110 inhabitants in the Poznań County. The process of urban sprawl, both within and outside the city limits, is the primary cause of transport problems in the whole metropolitan area. But there is also a need for an efficient public transit system, which would cover both city and suburbs. However, the process of fare integration has been taking place very slowly, because the communes cannot agree on financial terms, and so only a few of them use the same tickets as the city of Poznań. Although there is an almost perfect star-shaped pattern of railway lines around Poznań, no metropolitan railway has been created so far. Most suburban communes are served only by regional trains, with various frequency. Railways are not integrated into a one fare system with urban transit, so the commuters need to buy two tickets. It is therefore not surprising that in the absence of a reasonable alternative the inhabitants become more dependent on their cars. The motorization level in Poznań County in 2010 amounted to 516 cars per 1000 inhabitants. Since the most important services like education and culture, and many workplaces are located in Poznań, the everyday commuting leads to high congestion, and strongly increases the demand for parking places.

3 LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

According to Polish law, users of public roads may be obliged to pay for parking motor vehicles on public roads in paid parking zones (art. 13 and 13b of Law on public roads; 21.03.1985). Parking fees may be introduced in specially designated areas with a deficit of parking space, desirable level of parking traffic circulation, restricted access for drivers, and also there where the local authorities want to give priority to the public transport. Fees may be charged during certain working days/hours or round the clock. Some parking spaces (envelopes) may be reserved for exclusive use.

The rates of parking fees are set by the municipal council, but they must not exceed the maximum set by the parliament. The maximum fee for parking a motor vehicle cannot exceed 3 PLN (1 EUR = ca. 4 PLN) in the first hour, and in the second and third hour it may not increase by more than 20%. In the fourth hour and later the fee must be the same as in the first hour. It means that the local road management authorities have

limited flexibility in shaping the demand for parking spaces. These solutions are a result of quite a long legal “battle”.

In the mid-90s the maximal fee used to be regulated regionally, by voievode (the governor of a voivodeship appointed by the central government) and it was defined as an equivalent of the average price of 1.5 l of gasoline 98 RON (nowadays it would be about 8,80 PLN). After that, the maximum fee level was established by a governmental regulation. This solution was sentenced by the Constitutional Tribunal as not compliant with Polish Constitution (Sentence of Constitutional Tribunal; 10.12.2002). The main question was whether the parking fee is a price for service or a “local fee” (according to Polish law), thus, a special kind of tax. The Tribunal settlement proclaimed it to be a “local fee”, which has to be regulated by an act passed by parliament, not by governmental regulation. Despite the fact that former law lost its power, the drivers were not allowed to have old fees refunded. Except inflation correction, the maximum fee levels have not been updated since 2002.

Furthermore, restrictive conditions need to be met in order to establish a paid parking zone. Paid parking places need to be marked by both traffic signs and road surface marking. The regulations addressed to road management are more restrictive than general parking regulations addressed to road users. According to art. 47 of law on road traffic (20.06.1997) it is legal to park a car partially on a sidewalk if at least 1.5 m for pedestrian passage was left, and the parked car does not block the traffic. However, a car may be parked entirely on a sidewalk if such parking places have been marked with the respective sign. These regulations had created until September 2000 (until changes in decree on traffic signs) a kind of a “loophole” in the law: if a car had met the above criteria, it had been parked legally. It could be parked for free, even in a paid parking zone, unless the driver had parked on a marked paid parking place. In practice these legal but free places had been the primary target of drivers. There are certainly illegally parked cars, too. Those drivers do not pay a parking fee, but they are at risk to be fined. Yet, the enforcement of parking fees in practice turns out to be much easier than the enforcement of parking fines (the first ones are “administrative fines”, and so the ticket can be send by post to the car owner, while in the latter it needs to be given personally to the driver), so it actually pays off to park illegally. Furthermore, the parking tickets are not very restrictive 50 – 100 PLN. These problems concern all major Polish cities.

Government regulations of parking policy also include the law on spatial planning. A single regulation is of great importance here, namely the required number of parking places for each land use. This number ought to be specified in local development plans. To sum up, the legal system makes it very difficult for urban planners to apply a sustainable parking policy.

4 TRANSPORT AND PARKING POLICIES IN POZNAŃ

The main direction of transportation and road policy in Poznań is to support the development of ring roads. Large parts of the two inner ring roads already exist, and the third ring of approximately 7.5 – 9.5 kilometres in diameter is planned for the years to come. It is designed in a standard of a high-quality dual carriageway, and its construction costs are estimated at ca. 9.2 billion PLN. The system of ring roads within the city is intended to be linked with outer automobile bypass roads (A2, S5, S11), according to the City of Poznań Road Program for the Years 2008-2015. Directing the main traffic volume to the three ring roads, together with successive widening of existing main radial streets, is expected to cause more convenient conditions for traffic throughput. The additional advantage, according to the document, would be benefits for public transport and, indirectly, better conditions for parking program implementation (Park&Ride on the outskirts of the city; and multi-storey car parks – called in Poznań “Park&Go” – on the periphery of the centre itself).

Some general directions of parking policy are given by the Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development of the City of Poznań (a general spatial planning document for the entire city area) adopted in 1999 (with significant changes in 2008). It has been recognized that in certain areas demand for parking exceeds supply, especially in the city centre. The establishment of a paid parking zone (SPP) has been positively evaluated, since it “helped to bring order into the public spaces, and the project implementation, control, operation and maintenance of the system are assessed as one of the best in the country” (Studium..., Volume 1, Part II, Section 8.9), while in other areas without similar regulations, opposite effects occurred.

According to the norms and provisions, and existing local development plans, additional parking needs (for example, those resulting from the continuing absence of a Park&Ride system) should be met by parking on

users’ own plots, or commercial parking lots. Polish planning law states that local development plans should include records of the required number of parking spaces, in particular, the number of parking spaces in relation to the number of dwellings or number of employees or the surface of the manufacturing and service facilities.

Land use	Reference unit	<i>Studium 1999</i>	<i>Studium 2008</i>	Parking Policy 2008
		in city center / outside city center		
Offices	per 1000 m ² of usable area of premise	11-24/15-30	11/30	24/30
Industrial and craftsmanship’s areas	per 100 employees	8-14/15-32	8/32	14/32
Shops, shopping malls	per 1000 m ² of usable area of premise	7-20/10-45	7/45	20/45
Restaurants, bars etc.	per 100 places	12-20/15-36	12/36	20/36
Theaters, cinemas	per 100 places	12-23/15-37	12/37	23/37
Stadiums, arenas, concert halls etc.	per 100 places	6-12/10-20	6/20	12/20
Hospitals	per 10 beds	2-3/10-20	2/20	3/20
Hotels	per 100 bed	20-30/20-50	20/50	30/50
Multifamily residential areas	per 1000 inhabitants or flats	220-260/330	1/1,5	1/1,5
Single family houses	per one house	1-1,5/1,25-2	1,5/2	1,5/2

Table 1. Evolution of parking standards (minimum number of parking places) in Poznań. Source: own compilation based on Studium 1999, Studium 2008 and Poznań Parking Policy.

The basic principles of transport policy in Poznań have been adopted by the municipal council in 1999. According to this document, the general purpose of transport policy is to “achieve a sustainable transportation system, from the point of view of economy, space, society, and ecology”. Further documents which identified guidelines and described categorized areas of transportation policy are as follows:

- Sustainable Public Transport Development Plan for the Years 2007-2015 (24 October 2006);
- Poznań City Bike Program for the Years 2007-2015 (15 January 2008);
- City of Poznań Parking Policy (10 June 2008);
- City of Poznań Road Program for the Years 2008-2015 (16 December 2008).

The most severe disadvantage of Poznań Transport Policy is the lack of quantitative and qualitative objectives. The document contains a long list of policy guidelines and recommendations, but it fails to define such important terms like ‘sustainability’, nor does it establish a legible general goal, e. g. modal shift, reduction of travel time or CO2 emission limits. In consequence, it is hardly possible to evaluate the results of the implementation of this policy.

The overall purpose of Poznań Parking Policy is to define general directions of management and development of public parking spaces. However, it is not a statutory obligation of the local government in Poland to supply parking space. Therefore, the Parking Policy is not an operational program (i.e. it does not include technical and legal aspects, parking rules, financial sources of funding, time framework or measurements for evaluation). It is rather a non-binding “declaration of intent”. According to the this document, the parking policy should be mainly driven by the need to reduce demand in individual car traffic, rather than by the obligation to protect the environment.

One of the aims of Poznań Parking Policy is to “encourage travel behaviour aimed at counteraction of increasing traffic congestion”. This goal is to be achieved by such instruments like: traffic calming zones in

central area, support of public transport, encouraging non-automobile traffic (pedestrian and bicycle), and levelling anti-urban effects of automobile traffic, like urban barriers weakening the integrity of neighbourhoods. On the other hand, somewhat contradictory to the goal stated above, the need for more comfortable automobile traffic conditions is expressed, including improvement of traffic flow. Parking Policy concludes that most of the traffic could be (theoretically) operated by public transport (in indefinite future and under favourable urban conditions). Yet, the overall impression is that it is still the car, which is perceived as a symbol of comfort, freedom and speed, and so it should be the privileged means of transport within the city. According to the forecast, the phenomenon of giving up public transport in favour of private cars, is referred to as a 'natural' result of an increase in living standards, at least till 2020 (City of Poznań Road Program for the Years 2008-2015). To sum up, one of the official priorities is to encourage alternative means of transport. However, at the same time the conditions of driving are going to be improved via successive extending of total road network in relation to increasing car number.

5 PAID PARKING ZONE

Currently, there are approximately 300 parking lots and 59.5 thousands parking places in Poznań (Parking Policy, p. 3). Roughly a half of the parking places (53%) within the city centre are on-street places. On 1 July 1993 the city council of Poznań has established a Limited Parking Zone (Strefa Ograniczonego Postoju, SOP). The name has been later changed to Paid Parking Zone (Strefa Płatnego Parkowania, SPP). Additionally, there are about 1000 parking spaces within eight existing 'buffer' parking lots around the city centre.

SPP has been extended two times, in 1999 and 2011 (fig. 2). Also, in 1999 the parking fees have been differentiated by zones (red, yellow and green), and 'buffer' parking lots have been introduced. In 2011 the paid parking zone has been extended beyond the historical city centre to cover the district of Jeżyce, an old neighbourhood constructed at the turn of 19th and 20th century. Before that decision, there had been only some sections of streets with paid parking there.

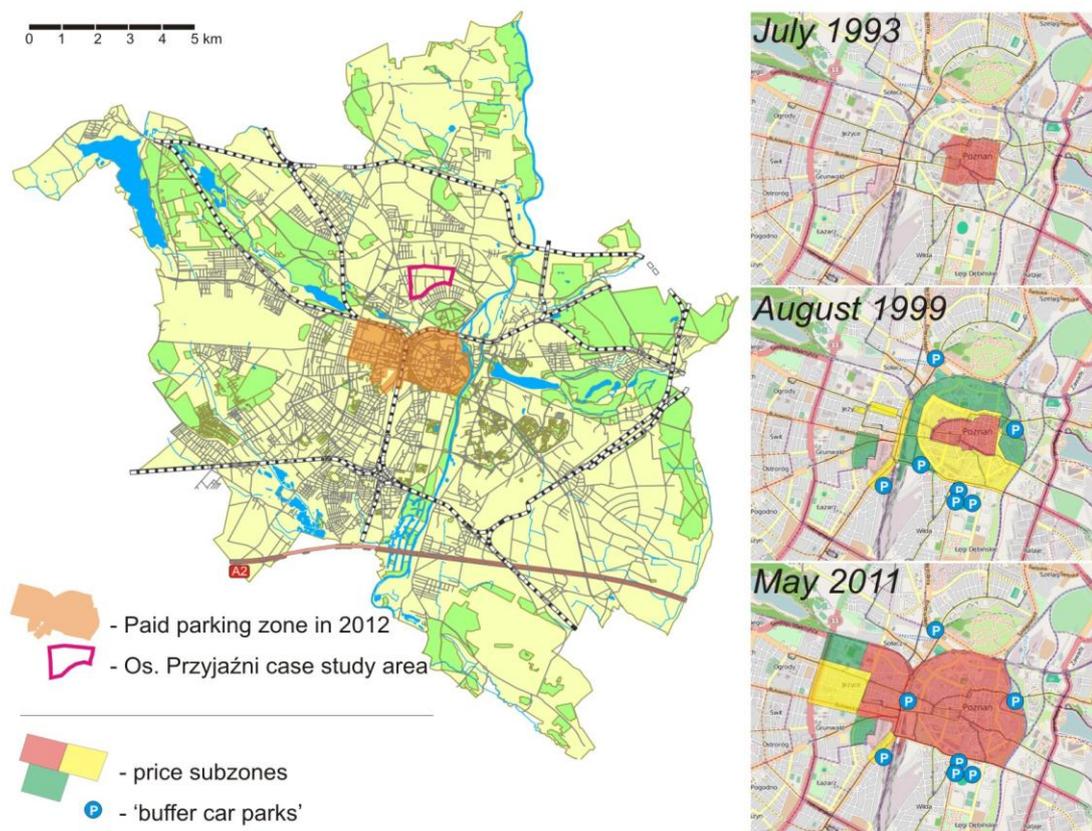


Fig. 2. Development of paid parking zone in Poznań. Source: own elaboration; maps based on OpenStreetMap.org

Paid parking zone in Poznań operates only on weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The most expensive sub-zone is the red one, with a base fee of 3 PLN/h, so the maximum permitted by law. In the yellow sub-zone the base fee is 2.80 PLN/h, and 2.00 PLN/h in the green one. Limits established by Polish parliament do

not allow to create parking policy based on supply and demand equilibrium. Therefore, during peak hours of demand (from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.) it is difficult to spot vacant places in the city centre.

It is less expensive to use the ‘buffer car parks’ than to park in the zone. The price amounts to 2.00-2.50 PLN/h during SPP working hours, and 3 PLN/h in other times. The inhabitants of the area covered by SPP can buy an inexpensive ID (parking license) for a car. It costs only 10 PLN per month for the first car and 150 PLN for each additional. Other users can buy a subscription for 16 - 24 PLN per day (depending on sub-zones). There are some allowances (usually 25%) for companies and institutions located within the SPP as well as special fare for disabled persons (5 PLN per month). Parking licenses and subscriptions can be bought at the office of the operator, and short-time tickets are sold at the machines. Fines apply in the case of parking without a valid ticket, and, depending on time and form of payment, they range from 10 to 50 PLN. According to the data of the operator, 21% of places are taken up by users who have not paid the fee, and only 20% of them are fined by parking controllers (see: fig 3).

It is worth to mention that in comparison to fines for free riding in urban transport, the fines for unpaid parking are very low. A passenger caught on free riding has to pay from 100 to 200 PLN (in the past it used to be even 300 PLN). The parking fees are also low in comparison with bus and tramway tickets: a normal ticket valid for a half an hour costs 3,00 PLN, what is an equivalent of one hour parking in the red (most expensive) sub-zone. Therefore, legal limitations of parking fees have negative influence of the competitiveness of public transport.

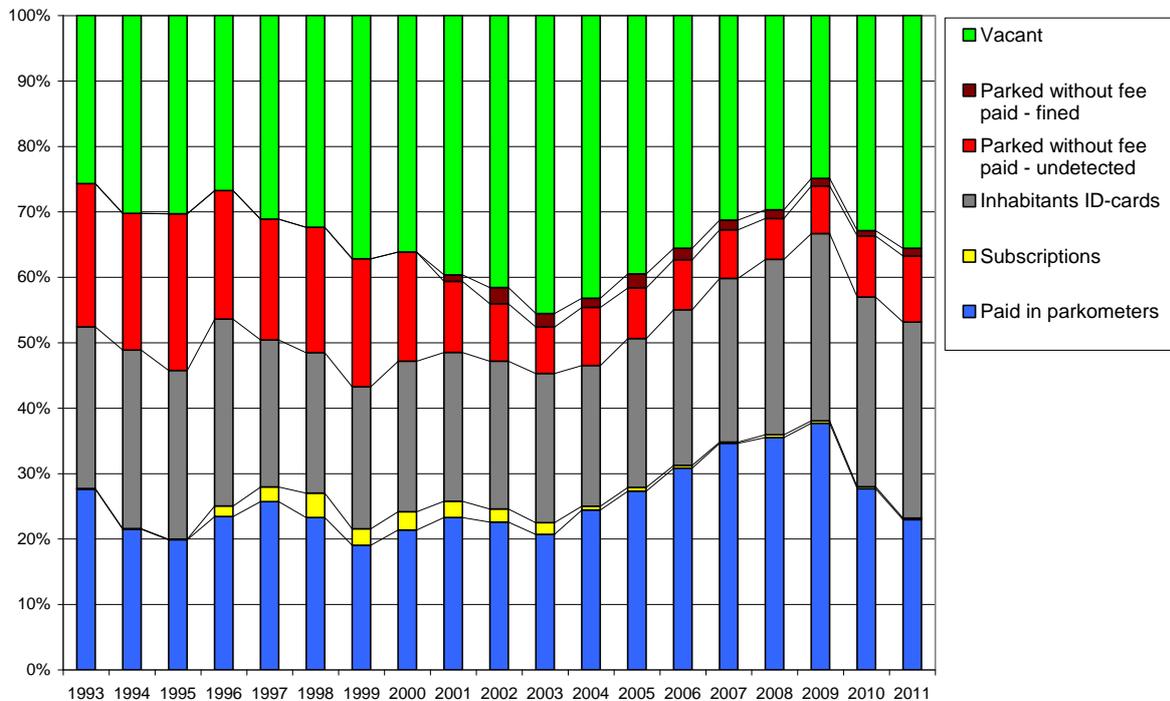


Fig. 3. Average usage of Paid Parking Zone (SPP) in 1993-2011. Source: own compilation based on data of Urban Road Management (ZDM Poznań)

After the extension of SPP in 2011, the public revenue from paid parking has increased by about 4 million PLN per year. The costs of the SPP extensions (including renewal of sidewalks and street greenery as well as some small improvements for cyclists) amounted to about 11 million PLN, and are expected to be covered within 3 years period. Estimated income for 2012 is 20 million PLN. Although there is a quite widespread opinion that public paid parking is “a repression against drivers and unjustified source of money”, during last years incomes from the SPP covered only about 2-3% of general expenses on road construction and maintenance in Poznań. In Poland, parking fee is the only one collected directly from drivers by communes. Excises, fees and other taxes paid by drivers go to state budget, and in fact they have been recently lower than the spending on state roads and motorways (Beim 2011).

One of the most urging problems of the parking policy is illegal parking (see: fig. 4). This problem results, among other things, from a lack of progress in the implementation of P&R policy, the state of public

transport and demand for parking in the area. Estimated average rate of illegal parking within SPP is approximately 15%. Some cars are parked at the gates, other at a pedestrian crossing, or just before the beginning of a sign designating parking zones (and thus formally outside the zone). In order to discourage illegal parking, repressive measures are applied, i.e. installing bollards (traffic poles) on streets with most severe parking problems. Moreover, some drivers used (until September 2000) above-mentioned “loopholes” to park legally outside designed parking spaces but without fee paid.

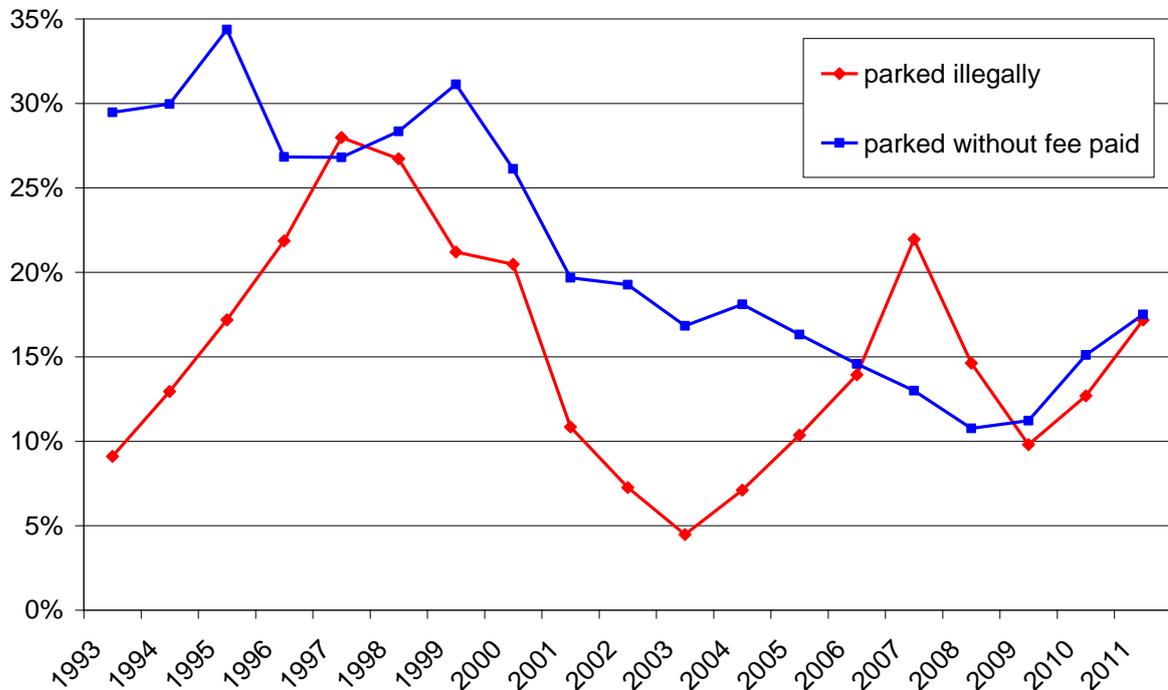


Fig. 4. Percentage of cars parked illegally and without fee paid (on designed parking spaces) the SPP (Paid Parking Zone) in 1993-2011. Source: own compilation based on data of Urban Road Management (ZDM Poznań)

Another extension of the paid parking zone is planned by the local authorities for the coming years. This time SPP should cover two another old neighbourhoods (Łazarz, Wilda). Recently, the municipal council has decided to extend paid parking hours from 8:00 a.m. on weekdays, and from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Saturdays. This change should become effective in the middle of 2012.

In the absence of a sufficient amount of multi-storey parking lots, which would meet the needs of parking for cars, Parking Policy calls for 13 such facilities in the city centre. The first and so far the only one underground parking was opened at the Liberty Square (Plac Wolności) in 2006. The cost amounted to about 140 million PLN, and the capacity is 540 parking spaces. It has been developed in a build – operate – return system. Together with the opening of the new underground car park, the City of Poznań eliminated about 450 parking places on sidewalks, although the official plans stated that 540 places should be removed. After negotiations with the investor, the city lowered the number of closed places by 90 (surprisingly, on the initiative of local authorities themselves). Moreover, a significant part of the removed places is only “closed” during the operating hours of the car park (10 a.m. – 6 a.m.), so in fact they can be used for illegal parking. Not surprisingly, the occupancy of the underground car park has turned out to be below the assumed targets. Despite numerous attempts from the side of the local authorities, no potential investors for other 12 planned parking lots have appeared so far.

6 DRIVERS CONQUER SPACE. A STORY OF A HOUSING ESTATE

As the city of Poznań expanded in the post-war period, a huge demand for housing space occurred. The response of government for this demand was a large-scale project nicknamed “northern development axis”. A suburban development, with large housing estates supplemented by other functions (for example, a university campus), but a linear one, with all the elements located along a rapid tram line. The plan was divided into several phases, and the first of them to be developed was the closest to the city centre – Winogrody. It was then subdivided into five housing estates, and one of them was named Osiedle Przyjaźni

(Friendship Estate – the Polish-Soviet friendship was meant, in accordance with the political climate of that time). The estate has been built in the 1970s by a housing cooperative, which is still responsible for management and owns most of the land.

From the perspective of urban design, the estate is a superblock. This spatial form is inseparably linked to the rule of traffic mode separation, the quasi-dogma of modernist planning. To make things clear, traffic separation was not an original idea of modernists, since it had already been applied, for example, in the famous planned community of Radburn in the U.S. state of New Jersey (1929), which bears more similarity with garden cities than with large housing estates. Yet, in the socialist “shortage economy” there was little demand for villa suburbs, but rather for mass housing.

This economy was also incapable of large-scale automobile manufacturing. Waiting time of several years for a tiny “Polish FIAT” (produced in Poland under a license) was nothing unusual. Under these circumstances the planners reasonably assumed that the ratio of automobile ownership would not exceed the range of 100 – 200 cars per 1000 inhabitants. The residents were supposed to commute mainly with the public transit, and so they did, notwithstanding that the rapid tram has not been constructed until 1997, so more than a decade after the last part of Winogrady had been finished (eventually, the original idea of “northern development axis” has been only partly realized). Moreover, the planners assumed that most basic goods and services should be provided in a walking distance. Unfortunately, the “estate centre” fell victim to financial cutbacks, and only a couple of years later shopping malls have filled the niche, certainly equipped with multi-storey car parks.

Following the rule of traffic separation, the estate was conceptually divided into three concentric zones. Car drivers should only have convenient access to the outer zone, whereas the two inner zones, with housing, schools, and leisure facilities, should be a domain of pedestrians and cyclists, with limited access for cars (Marciniak 2005). No through traffic was allowed within the superblock, and also no public transit. As the projected ratio of motorization was low, not much space was allocated for parking. The basic solution was to allow on-street parking, which to some extent collided with the idea of traffic-free internal zone, but with a relatively small number of drivers the negative effects were tolerable. Yet the conditions have changed as the wave of mass motorization reached Poland.

Rapidly increasing level of motorization, especially after the accession of Poland to the EU (2004), which allowed for duty-free import of used cars, and so made car ownership as cheap as never before, created a high demand for parking space. This caused a trouble especially for large housing estates, which as already mentioned, have been designed mainly for non-motorized mobility.

There are several kinds of parking spaces on the estate. In the two blocks of flats that have been constructed in last years there are underground car parks, which serve mostly their inhabitants. Then there are paid parking spaces with a capacity for several hundred cars, with monthly fee of about 150 PLN. Those who do not wish to pay, can park their car on the street, although in certain times they need to spend some time cruising for a free place. And if they are unable to find one, or simply want to park closer to the door, they can use another option – wild parking. It means parking the car in such a way which is either illegal (for example, does not leave enough space for pedestrians), or forces other drivers to disobey the rules (for example, to drive where it is not allowed to). Finally, there are over 500 parking places in car parks adjacent to shopping centres, mainly in the northern part of the estate.

The story of a last couple of years is a story of drivers taking more and more space of the estate. The settlement of parking places has also affected driving behaviour, which will be mentioned in the later part. The process of taking over the space has been in part spontaneous, and in part an organized one. Paid private parking lots have been created between the blocks of flats, where – according to the principles of modernism – much “social” space was left. Yet it turned out to be not enough.

Demand for parking space increased when a private developer built a new block in the north-western part of the estate. The weak system of spatial planning has been usually unable to prevent such “in-fill” developments in large housing estates that have become quite common in the last years because of the “housing boom”. The building is equipped with an underground car park, but the number of parking spaces turned out to be insufficient (62 places per 188 dwellings). This led to a conflict between the residents of the block and of the neighbouring buildings, who claim that new neighbours leave their cars on a parking lot which belongs to the housing cooperative. In their opinion, as non-members, they are not entitled to do that.

To solve the conflict, the authorities of the housing cooperative have decided to turn another bit of green space into a parking lot. Yet, some residents of the nearest block protested against having cars park too close to their windows. They proposed to limit access to the existing lot to the members of cooperative only. They also demanded a change of authorities of the cooperative, but the attempt was unsuccessful. Successful on the contrary has been until now their opposition against the new parking lot.

Having learned from the experience, the authorities of the housing cooperative had planned a much larger underground car park, when they have built a new block of flats a couple of years later. They have also consequently pursued the goal of increasing parking space by taking over the green space. Recently a new parking lot for about 50 cars has been built at the very heart of the estate, in a zone that in original plans was considered as “internal”, so essentially free from car traffic. However, as the construction of new blocks has already shown, the old plans are hardly obeyed.

The new parking lot is located next to Hercena street, which runs from east to west through the middle of the estate. Originally it was only allowed to drive in the eastern and western part, and the central part was only accessible for pedestrians and cyclists. This was a convenient and safe solution since a small park is located in the northern part of the street, and many people with small children go through. Because of the construction of the new parking lot, traffic rules on Hercena street have been changed (fig. 5). About 100 m long section of the pedestrian route has been converted into a street with sidewalk. In the western part, the pedestrian section separating the traffic from another street (running from north to south) is now only about 20 m long. There is no physical barrier that would stop the traffic, and it is not possible to establish one, because the street is used by emergency vehicles. And how do the drivers behave in such situation? Many of them do not hesitate to drive through the pedestrian part. A short distance, but some rule has been broken.



Fig. 5. Case study: changes in traffic organisation caused by a new parking lot. Source: own elaboration; maps based on OpenStreetMap.org.

And this was not the end. The changes had a psychological effect. As the drivers have noticed that many people disobey the rules, they felt encouraged to do the same. And so more drivers appeared on the longer part of pedestrian route, the one which is close to the park. First just a small step, then a bigger one. Each day several dozen of cars drive through the pedestrian route, and the number is growing. They have a very small chance to be fined, because the municipal police does not make controls frequently. The pedestrians seem to

be accustomed to the new situation, just the parents need to look after their children more carefully. Recall, many pedestrians are at times drivers and vice versa.

Some general conclusions can be drawn from this particular case. Several decades ago the rule of traffic mode separation was seen as a great progress in urban design, or even the salvation for “dying” cities. A great example of this popular belief is Hans Bernhard Reichow's work “Die autogerechte Stadt”, and especially its very enthusiastic reception among planners throughout Europe (Reichow 1959). The basic idea of traffic mode separation was to divide the city into a “realm of drivers” and a “realm of non-drivers”. Both “realms” should coexist peacefully, respecting each other's rights. Yet, the concept turned out not to work very well. The drivers were not only unwilling to respect the rights of non-drivers as “minority” in their own realm. They have also invaded the realm of non-drivers, as they felt that driving was not convenient enough yet. So traffic mode separation in fact turned into a “battle of realms”, with one side having a huge advantage of power over the other. The positive benefits of this battle for the city are rather questionable.

7 CONCLUSION

Poznań, like other Polish cities, remains under strong automobile pressure. The dominance of cars in urban space is clearly visible, not only within the city center area, but at modernistic housing estates as well. Downtown streets are losing their representative character, while housing districts are deprived of recreational areas and walking routes. The original urban design and layout of the city is being distorted. One of the greatest obstacles to restore spatial order are the legal provisions, which, on one hand, do not protect sidewalks effectively against illegal stopover, while allow for destruction of spatial structures on the other. Lack of stringent legislation makes the construction of multi-storey car parks unprofitable. Parking chaos continually deepens. Yet, flawed legislation does not necessarily imply passivity. The city has a great potential to organize the urban space through design. But surprisingly it is not using it. Nor does it use the possibility of lobbying for improved legislation, as there is no political will. This kind of thinking is grounded in the realities of the 1990s, when it was the criterion of car accessibility what marked the fashionable investments. Nowadays, one can see that the investors interested in central locations expect primarily the improvement of pedestrian conditions. In 2011 local media reported two cases with a symbolic meaning. In the first case, a German investor withdrawn from the purchase of the "House of Books" (multistorey shopping mall of 1970s.) due to insufficient volume of pedestrian traffic, even though the building is located straight in the city center. In the second case, an Irish investor, who modernizes an office complex at Ratajczaka St., explained that among the main reasons for his investments were plans for a "zone 30" and new tram line.

Poznań, without a proper parking policy, exposes itself to the risk of stagnation, which will foster the escape of people and commerce to the suburbs.

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