

Downtown - the sacred and the profane. Case study of poznan, poland.

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Abstract

This work presents selected issues of transformations and development of downtown in a Polish metropolitan city assessed in view of its current condition. The research has analysed structural problems of downtown, with particular focus on the leading role of the *sacred* - i.e. cultural heritage potential and its relations with the *profane*, i.e. commercial investment projects. The thesis adopted for the research maintains that sustainable revitalisation of downtown in Polish cities translates into a harmony between cultural and commercial values, i.e. between the *sacred* and the *profane*, in compliance with the balanced environment principle. The presented research has been conducted on the example of the Poznan downtown. The quality of the existing spatial resources in Poznan downtown has been assessed with the use of the physiognomic delimitation and the value zoning methods on the basis of a set of spatial indices combined with such marketing methods as SWOT, DESIRE and AIDA. As a result, we have been able to draw up an identification map of the *sacred - profane areas*.

Keywords: transformations and development of downtown, *the sacred* and *the profane*, identification map

Introduction

The research has focused on the transformations and development of downtown in a representative Polish metropolitan city, namely of downtown in Poznan. For the purpose of the studies, the authors have selected the most important problematic issues and the most typical conditions that characterise the relations between cultural and commercial values - the *sacred* and the *profane* - which predetermine the quality of downtown and living conditions of the inhabitants.

The sacred – cultural and social conditions

Why the *sacred* and the *profane*? Words of Mircea Eliade² aptly answer this question, he says that “*sacred and profane are two modes of being in the world, two existential situations assumed by man in the course of his history (...) The man of the traditional societies is admittedly a homo religious,*

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² Eliade M., *Sacrum i profanum*, Warsaw 1999, p.10-22.

but his behaviour forms part of the general behaviour of mankind (...).” Why are these elements so important? The man has always aspired for a cosmic universe, whereas his world has always been hierarchical. Thus, in the global and sacrilegious world, he feels the need to search for the point of reference and orientation, in other words, for the sacred - a holy place, place of cultural identity, genius loci.

Holy places, irrespective of the observed by man system of spiritual or material values, have been omnipresent in traditional societies. Cities were typically founded as a result of the human need to identify a holy place, which was then a permanent point of reference for an individual or certain local community. *Axis mundi*: a middle/centre is the vertical axis that links certain places on the Earth with: the Universe (heaven and hell). Irrespective of the culture, this system has always formed the basis for man’s orientation and reference, including contemporary man living in the globalised world. “ *Religious man's desire to live in the sacred is in fact equivalent to his desire to take up his abode in objective reality, not to let himself be paralyzed by the never-ceasing relativity (...) The sacred reveals absolute reality and at the same time makes orientation possible; hence it founds the world in the sense that it fixes the limits and establishes the order of the world*”³.

Downtown in a Polish city is an area that encompasses utilitarian, and above all, spiritual values. It is the space where the *profane* and the *sacred* (business and culture) converge, the starting point and a point of reference for all directions in the city: running vertically (top to bottom) or horizontally (left to right), or from/to the city centre or any spatio-temporal directions (distance that can be covered in space in a set time period).

Cosmic orientation of the man has remained unchanged ever since he created a house, a housing estate and a town. The sacred place is at the midpoint of the earth; the navel of the universe, the focal point of cultural practices, folk customs, rites, the feeling of perseverance, identity and social bonds. Cultural practices and space where they have been performed represent the overall values and norms (including customs and beliefs) passed down from one generation to another. All types of representations of spiritual, ideological, symbolic, intellectual, rational and material expressions of any social activities of very many generations can be found in the downtown area.

What does the man need? A contemporary man, even if living in a secular, material-oriented high-tech world, as a representative of a *Homo sapiens* will always aspire to satisfy its own needs: safety, recognition, friendship, new sensations felt due to the *profane*. Higher (e.g. spiritual, emotional and symbolic) needs can be only satisfied through the *sacred*. Higher needs include common needs, satisfied in urban space, i.e. orientation or cognition needs as well as search for emotional contact and the meaning of life.

As K. Obuchowski⁴ confirms a pure act of striving is a certain form of needs satisfaction. Achievement of the pursued goals underlies stability of man’s life; whereas the form of that life results from aspirations and their consequences. The need of the sense of life is demonstrated in man’s striving for a system of values that would then serve as points of reference in any life decisions. It is a form of internal adherence to the culture that seems to be subsiding in the external surroundings. Fostering such culture is essential for the man to be a truly human creation. The known

³ *op. cit.*, p.21-22.

⁴ Obuchowski K., *Przez galaktykę potrzeb*, Poznań 1995, p. 15, 59, 196, 318, 319, 320.

rules of culture set forth relevant obligations and criteria for the good and evil. Culture is only alive, and so are works of art, if it continues/they continue to exist in newer and newer forms leading to new sensations or created under the inspiration with new sensations. Even if the man observes certain traditions, he needs to know why he practices them, what the value of his traditions is, and especially that its value depends on being alive and cannot be assessed as a time-detached solo value. This process of sustainment of the sense of life in a changeable world, with new knowledge accumulating rapidly, exposes us to a wide range of different systems of values that should be flexible enough to be efficiently modified, without any detriment to the identity and impediment to the continuation of required to satisfy all man's needs - the basic and the higher ones.

Downtown as existential space

Therefore, can places in a downtown area be designated as *mine* or *ours* or do these places only serve the satisfaction of basic needs (such as shopping or entertainment) that do not require any engagement of higher feelings? Identification of these particular places underlies man's orientation and ability to adapt to a functionally and spatially complex urbanscape. However, it is the city centre that plays the most important ritual role. The role of common public space composed of *the sacred* and *the profane*, a place of traditional rites and festivities of the local community. The meaning of the centre as a focal point, crucial for spatial and cultural orientation of man, is highlighted in the "theory of existential space"⁵, which takes into account abstract as well as real aspects thereof. Christian Norberg-Schulz so observes: "*Topology does not deal with permanent distances, angles and areas, but is based upon relations such as proximity, separation, succession, closure (inside-outside) and continuity. The topological schemata focus on the role of places in space. Man's space is subjectively centred and always based on the notion of centre. The elementary organizational schemata consist in the establishment of centres or places (proximity), directions or paths (continuity) or domains (enclosure). To orient himself, man above all needs to grasp such relations. The centre is the basis of spatial organization and for respective communities it represents the centre of their world. The centre of the world that is concretized via the axis mundi.*" Aristotle's logic is about correctly attributing specific properties such as over, under, in front of, behind, left or right. According to him, the unconscious human psyche always creates pairs of opposites in relation to man's orientation in the field of gravity. A vertical direction expresses the concept of rising or falling, and this has always entailed particular connotations. Vertical lines have been perceived as divine orientation in space. They show us the path leading "up" or "down" from the reality of our daily lives. The simplest model of man's existential space is, therefore, a horizontal plane pierced by a vertical axis. In certain theories the cardinal points were united with the axis mundi to form a comprehensive cosmology. Vitruvius says that "*...Nature has put one cardo of the world axis through a northern point behind the Great Bear, and the other under the earth to the opposite regions in the south. The Roman city, thus, was organized around the cardo (axis mundi) running north-south and the decumanus running east-west*". The main axes of a Roman city delimited four quarters. Since the Ancient times, the world has been pictured as divided into four parts, a Roman city can be, thus, interpreted as *imago mundi*. The world structured into zones defined with the

⁵ Norberg-Schulz Ch., *Bycie, przestrzeń i architektura*. Warsaw 2000, p. 17.

“natural” directions, offered the ancient man his existential space. Demarcation of the most central, focal point was of strategic importance for any further spatial organisation of a city.⁶

The city centre is a unique *axis mundi*. This is where the sacred place most actively engages into interaction with the profane. Is the balance between the sacred and the profane in the cultural and spatial zone endangered today? It appears that it is. Poorly controlled transformations of downtown areas in Polish cities above all result from detrimental acts of the people (members of the local government, businessmen, developers, etc.) that have adversely affected: values, centuries-long cultures, genius loci and their own roots. Where the prevailing goal is the quick return on investment, then land is of higher value than the existing, often degraded, development (even if it might represent the cultural heritage of high historical value). Lack of higher feelings and a global approach undermining unique cultural heritage turn us into consumers that show absolute disregard for the uniqueness and authenticity of heritage. *“Functional zoning, residential segregation by income, banal housing, careless approach to the environment make an imprint on contemporary development”*, says G. Piccinato. *“We need protection, and if necessary, reinforcement of cultural identity of places and people. Historical centres are obvious signs of the past. Most often, not just by a coincidence, they are the most precious urban tissue yet, this identity has its price. The fact that downtown areas of European towns are also their urban nuclei has proven to be an asset and a threat at the same time. In the times of fast business growth, value of land usually exceeds the value of buildings erected thereon, for that reason the existing urban tissue is ruthlessly being replaced with new facilities that offer better ROI indices. Physical performance of buildings has now become the subject matter of particular care in view of the treats posed to spatial and architectural layouts by contractors and land sales profiteers.”*⁷

The profane – economic and social conditions

Therefore, how should we proceed to ensure proper and harmonious development of downtown? Market economy, business priorities, competitiveness and high ROI interest underlie two different approaches to downtown revitalisation. The first, focused mainly on a quick profit, usually disregards any existing cultural values. Frequently, the buildings of high historical value require major refurbishment, which directly translates into higher investment costs. If the investor is not willing to incur a higher financial burden, then old buildings are pulled down because it is the land value that he is after. The second, more optimised approach is based on the principle of sustainable development. It is supported with the EU Integrated Regional Operational Programme, in particular the Priority Axis III, which highlights the importance of revitalisation of urban areas to increase their competitiveness. In case of investments included in the programme, higher costs are financed with the structural funds.

What is the competitiveness of urban space? *“Competitiveness is understood as attractiveness or in other words ability to attract investors and other stakeholders”*, as T. Markowski [2003] maintains. Competitiveness is also associated with the idea of sustainable development, i.e. the development that ensures provision of basic services to the inhabitants and the entire community in a manner

⁶ *Ibidem*, s. 21,22,230.

⁷ Piccinato G., *Wszystkie miasta są historyczne (ale niektóre bardziej)* [All cities are historical (but some more than others) [in:] *Miasto historyczne. Potencjał dziedzictwa*, red. J. Purchla, Kraków 1997, p. 21.

friendly to the environment and community and in a cost efficient manner, without posing any threats to the natural, urban and social systems. Competitiveness of urban space shall be understood as its attractiveness for various groups of users. Competitiveness of space can be analysed in view of economic, social or material factors as well as its natural advantages. In times of tough competition between cities, appropriate marketing strategy to create a positive image of a city is gaining importance. It is facilitated with the exposure of cultural values of the city and their respective meaning⁸.

Therefore, cultural values of urban space not only highlight the city specifics and reinforce its identity but also constitute a highly competitive advantage for business decisions. In other words, they render respective economic benefits because, as T. Markowski claims, the city is a mega-product. And as such, it involves mutual interrelations and structural organisation of (material and immaterial) forms of products (services) that are available to various groups of users. As a mega-product, it is composed of the following: *image* of the city, local culture, entrepreneurship. The list is not exhaustive and also includes: ability of self-organisation and network connectivity between various units and transport systems as well as quality of development. The *image* represents an immaterial, deep rooted in the culture of a community, value that is part of common knowledge and perception of a given place or a city itself. Appropriately created image of a city should appeal to the investors via a potentially wide range of values that suit their convenience⁹.

In order to increase competitiveness, the cities need to use relevant marketing strategies. "*Rating is becoming a common criterion in the evaluation of cities in terms of their growth potential.*" Ratings and rankings of cities require a variety of tools and marketing strategies to be applied. Out of the marketing tools listed by T. Markowski, we have selected DESIRE and AIDA methods and adapted them to the purposes of this research work. The case study of downtown area in Poznan presents the results obtained with the use of the aforementioned methods.

The centre and its features

Is the centre convergent with the downtown area? No. What is the difference? Despite the fact that downtown serves a wide range of various functions and features different structures, it is characterised with certain unique features. In reference to many different centres of activities in a polycentric urban system, a functional dominant such as a shopping centre, a business centre, etc. always represents a main, distinctive feature. In the opinion of S. Juchnowicz, a renowned expert in designing urban downtown areas, "*the image of the downtown area in highly advanced urban layouts can be easily visually distinguished (e.g. it is often delimited with components of the traffic organisation, or it features a different style of development), nevertheless, the city centre may encompass several concentrations dedicated to different functions (e.g. an administrative centre, a shopping centre, a centre of culture) and for that reason it is more difficult to be defined and to be described precisely.*"¹⁰.

⁸ Markowski T., *Konkurencyjność miast –prokonkurencyjne zarządzanie*, Urbanista 2/2003, Warsaw, p. 22-24.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Juchnowicz S., *Śródmieścia miast polskich. Studia nad ukształtowaniem i rozwojem centrów*, Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk 1971, p. 68.

Boundaries of a city centre are difficult to delimit because, as many researchers stress, they are not fixed and contain a number of zones. The downtown area is easier to define. There are a few methods of identifying the downtown, among others a physiognomic analysis applied in this case study. *“The method consists in the observations of presence/absence of a number of visual factors that distinguish this part of the city from others (e.g. the network of streets, the size of building lots, density and height of development, building types and their construction dates, etc.). In many cities, e.g. in the USA, prominent high development of the city centre visually stands out from any other city parts. Mere observation, e.g. “a bird-eye view” photo will show the approximate range thereof.”*¹¹. Other methods included an isokinetic evaluation of the land value, sales price and rent. Because the value of land is constantly changing, we have assumed that its highest value is always the value of land in the city centre.

Depending on its individual features, each city has its own spatial model of the centre. *“By observing the phenomena that undergo in downtown areas in developed countries and comparing them to the situation prevailing in downtown areas in Polish cities, we have been able to define general objectives of developing and reconstructing the central areas in order to furnish them with prior defined, desirable features of a city centre in a contemporary city”*¹². Even if S. Juchnowicz so concluded 30 years ago, this statement is still valid. At the moment Polish cities experience the same problems related to transformations and development of downtown as the cities in Europe and in the world used to have in the 1960s and 1970s. To learn a lesson and not to repeat their mistakes, we should fall back on their experience and use verified research methods. Features of a contemporary city centre converge with the goals of its transformations and development. The authors hereof fully share this opinion. Such features include: attractiveness, functionality, accessibility, cost effectiveness and flexibility. All of them are co-dependant.

In terms of current market conditions, there are other equally important features of a city centre such as: competitiveness understood as attractiveness, good image composed of the physiognomy (appearance) and the public media image (commercials, advertisements, advertising boards) addressed to various social groups of stakeholders (inhabitants, investors, developers, etc.). Competitiveness and attractiveness of downtown areas stems from their spatial resources: the *sacred* (material and spiritual assets) and the *profane*. They may also be deemed as visual marketing aids promoting such features of downtown areas as: declaratory nature, interest sparking nature, communication of innovations, demonstration of prestige, traceability and emotive nature. Yet, the most important competitive advantage of downtown is its unique specifics and identity, predetermined with the resources of the *sacred* (i.e. historical legacy and the authentic culture), expressed generally and universally in its physiognomy.

Competitiveness and attractiveness of downtown areas result not only from unique cultural and spatial values of the sacred but also from the ability to satisfy increasingly diversified social needs and to stimulate local communities to undertake desirable activities in downtown space (activities, concentration).

¹¹ *Ibidem.*

¹² *Op. cit.*

downtown - the sacred and the profane.case study of poznan, poland.

According to E. A. Strong¹³, AIDA (*Attention, Interest, Desire, Action*) model theory maintains that content (here spatial systems) can stimulate respective social behaviour: attention – interest – desire – conviction – action. The DESIRE (*Design/Aesthetics, Emotion, Security/Convenience, Individuality, Resort/mixed-use-center, Exclusivity/privilege*) method - according to A. Steinecke¹⁴ - is aimed to ensure the most comfortable spatial conditions, in particular in downtown areas via their design/aesthetics, security/convenience, individuality, mixed-use-centres and exclusivity/privilege. The DESIRE method mainly pertains to tourism related issues, it, however, finds its application in creating comprehensive models of spatial transformations of downtown, which also performs the tourist function. For the reasons as aforementioned, the two methods have been used for this research.

Poznan downtown - case study

Characteristics of the existing status quo and development conditions

The concept of Poznan Metropolitan Area and its range were defined in the Plan adopted for Wielkopolska Region in 2004. Since then the Plan stated that the city of Poznan was a central and multi-functional area of intensive development. From then on the role of downtown, serving the functions of the city centre, has significantly increased. Basic documents of Strategic Planning for the City of Poznan, in this: the Development Strategy and the Study of Land Use Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development, as a priority envisage the development of the downtown area and creation of the new *city*. The SWOT analysis made for the city has distinguished eight Poznan development priorities: new workplaces, investment in know-how, accessibility of the city, new information and communication technologies, high quality of housing, culture and recreation, new quality of the city centre, citizen community. Implementation of the “New quality of the city centre” is a priority of particular importance. It comprises five development programmes for selected components of the spatial and functional urban tissue characterised with complex and diversified cultural values.

The following structures formed in the course of Poznan turbulent history, represent high cultural values of downtown: Ostrów Tumski, Śródka and Ostrówek and Komandoria, Old Town-the centre, Wilda, Jeżyce, Łazarz (chartered towns). The 19th century city annexed these independently functioning settlements and today they constitute part of the downtown area and are distinguished with compact, dense development, outstanding with its quite uniform and characteristic spatial attire, with many buildings of exceptional architectural and visual value.

These places create unique atmosphere, with the *genius loci* being the Old Market Square development around a central quarter of streets: the Royal Castle of Przemysł I, the Świętojańska backstreet leading to Poznań Fara church, Paderewskiego street - a reminder of the glorious past - and the National Museum situated therein, or Wolności Square with the arcades that protected merchant's houses and the Raczyński Library building as well as many other sacral and secular buildings. The characteristic feature of the downtown area are the central squares linked via main streets, for example: św. Marcin street with the complex of Adam Mickiewicz University buildings,

¹³ Strong E. A., *Marketing w praktyce*, Warsaw 1996, p. 48.

¹⁴ Steinecke A., *Turystyka w miastach historycznych. Szanse i ryzyko. Spojrzenie niemieckie* [in:] *Dziedzictwo a turystyka*, Kraków 1999, red. J.Purchla, p. 58.

Adam Mickiewicz park with the monument in memory of the Poznań June 1956 events, the Imperial Castle, a complex of the first skyscrapers in Poznan named *Alfa*, St. Martin church; Al. K. Marcinkowskiego, as well as the following streets: 23 lutego and 27 grudnia converging at the well-known *Okrągłak (Rotunda)* building. The downtown area also houses many historical sights: sacral and secular buildings erected in different epochs. The Prussian fortification ring of the 19th century, the so-called Stübben's Ring, delimits the present area of downtown, or as per the Study of Land Use Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development of Poznan - Zone A.

Once Poznan attained the rank of a metropolis, the municipal authorities decided to work up new guidelines for spatial development of the city, intended to increase its investment and spatial attractiveness and competitiveness. Developing the guidelines, the municipal authorities wanted to find the answers to the basic questions: “does Poznan have features of a city that is attractive in the broad meaning thereof, is it competitive in Poland and in Europe, is it capable of attracting investors and activists, does the present zoning plan meet the expectations and aspirations of the inhabitants?” Answers to some of those questions were furnished as a result of sociological studies focused on the analysis of social systems being the basis for “*people/inhabitants-oriented management*” and published in “*Życie w Poznaniu*”. The analysis was made by the academics of the Institute of Sociology at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań on the basis of the British studies.

Searching for the answers to the questions, the municipal authorities organised a number of panel discussions between representatives of different professions and the inhabitants. The concept of the “*new city*” designed by the chief designer of Poznań Municipal Office raised heated discussions among various professionals. For that reason, the municipal authorities announced a single-stage design competition, which sparked high interest and attracted many design teams. The competition task was as follows: “*developing methodology of a programme for the creation of new quality in the city centre in Poznan and proposing ways of its implementation.*” Poznan University of Technology and the Faculty of Architecture of Poznan University of Technology were also represented in this competition¹⁵. In the competition, the participants had to make relevant for decisions concerning downtown, among others they had to answer the question on how to structure the development process of the present city centre to integrate the areas showing features of a sub-centre and located around the current city centre. The areas concerned were as follows: „Wolne Tory” and „Dziura Toruńska” (located between the Teatralny Bridge and Dworcowy Bridge, of an area of about 13 hectares), as well as the post-industrial sites in the eastern part of the downtown (Chwaliszewo) and other - located mainly in the eastern part of the city at the Varta river bank.

Special Municipal Programme no. 25 was intended to render ideas on new quality of the city centre. The programme (fully conceptual in its nature) underlay the implementation of the main strategic purpose, i.e. the improvement of the functioning, modernisation and development of the urban tissue. This included a concept of sustainable and innovative economy, friendly for the investors, business partners and tourists. Another important goal was to strengthen the position of Poznan as a national and international centre of trade. In view of the foregoing, the centre of Poznan was expected to serve a number of different functions, i.e. as a transport hub, main concentration of services, hotels and businesses. The new quality of the city centre was to serve as a new identity card of Poznan,

¹⁵ Ewa Cichy-Pazder was a member of a design team that took part in the competition.

featuring new, outstanding with form and height, buildings blending nicely with the previous landmarks of the city, i.e. the following dominants: the Old Town development, the International Poznan Fairs, Alfa skyscrapers (constructed in the 1960s and 1970s), or the buildings of the University of Economics and Business in Poznan, Poznan Financial Centre and the Academy of Music, and more recent buildings such as the Centre for Education at Poznan University of Technology (completed in 2005) in the premises of the university campus *Warta*. The potential of *Malta*, water sports and recreation centre, and the area between downtown and the International Poznan Fairs, along the railway lines (Roosevelta street), which houses many commercial facilities, in this (existing or under construction) office towers and hotels of international chains, is also worth noting.

Poznan downtown - *the sacred and the profane*

The authors hereof have for many years studied and analysed the issues of functional and spatial quality of downtown areas in a big city of a historical value. In their studies, they have taken into account ecological, spatial and social factors underlying the quality assessment.

The authors hereof have assumed that the human factor shall have priority in the shaping of downtown space, as a result the research had to pursue two research levels concerning: cultural heritage - *the sacred* and commercial investments - *the profane*. This approach seems to comply with the current trends because it takes into account the market economy and the need to preserve cultural heritage (determinant of local identity and culture). To carry out respective analyses for the purpose of this work, the authors have applied both generally applicable urban methods and selected marketing methods (SWOT, AIDA, DESIRE). By highlighting the fact that attractiveness of downtown shall be understood as competitiveness, the authors have exposed our need to preserve the unique and specific features of Poznan downtown areas because they are our cultural heritage.

The research on the attractiveness of Poznan downtown concerned the quality of its visual form. The value of downtown areas was assessed on the basis of a set of selected quality indices. The work took the account of the following: current condition of downtown spatial development, visual assets and emotional impact. Because various areas were identified to have different spatial offers for the users, the authors have attempted to assess - in a limited scope and without any sociological studies - the degree of fulfilment of social needs in the field of safety, comfort and leisure. The basic criterion adopted for the assessment of downtown quality was the user's orientation and man's adaptation abilities. The majority of downtown areas in Poznan were positively assessed, with the exception of certain fragments diagnosed with lack of spatial order and structural degradation (part of Chwaliszewo, post-industrial areas, post-industrial railway areas). Revitalisation of these degraded areas into areas of strategic development of downtown shall in general positively affect the quality of downtown tissue.

This work presents the second stage of the research on the assessment of the condition and potential of cultural resources (*the sacred*) and commercial resources (*the profane*) of downtown areas in Poznan, made on the basis of the determination of their spatial and economic attractiveness. The quality of downtown space in Poznan was analysed with the use of the delimitation method. The analysis was aimed to highlight the areas of concentration of *the sacred* and *the profane* facilities. For that purpose, a number of different research methods was applied, including the physiognomic

analysis and such marketing methods as SWOT, AIDA and DESIRE. The scheme of research is presented in the table below (Fig. 1).

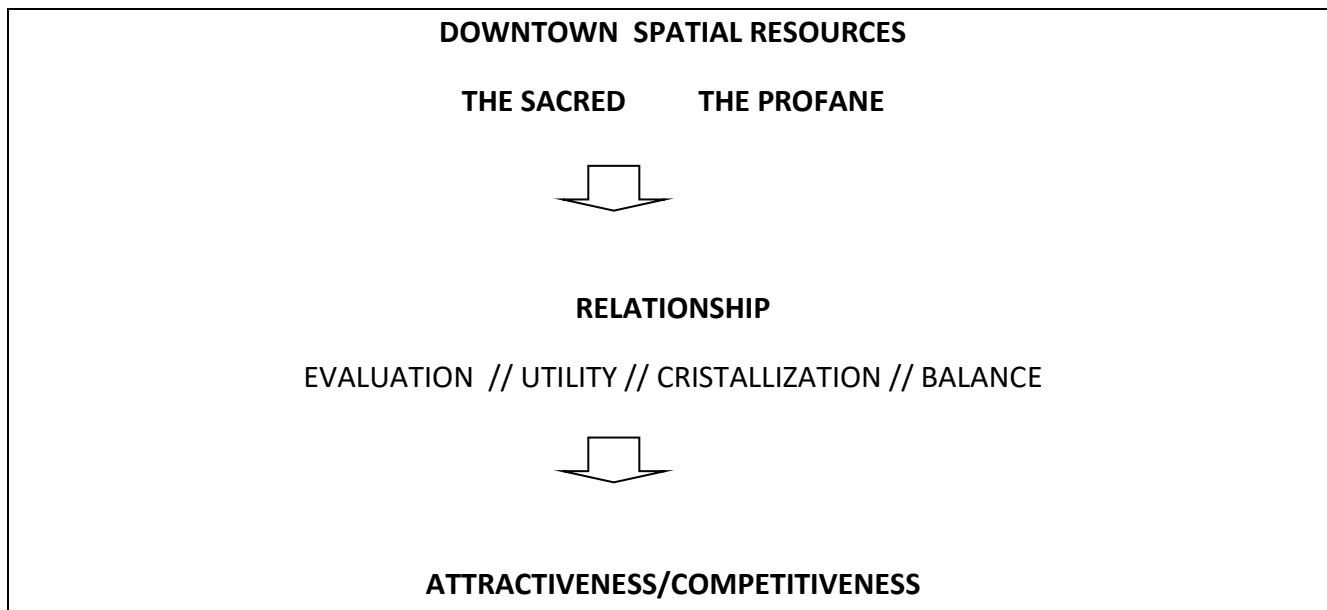


Fig. 1 Correlations of *the sacred* and *the profane* and their impact on the quality of downtown.

The urban layouts, i.e. main components of public space - squares and streets, also fell within the scope of the research. For the purpose of the research, the authors have selected representative spots of downtown spatial structure, that are of high cultural and commercial value and are characterised with continuous commercial frontage. The analysis of downtown space in Poznan, made based on the above mentioned criteria, also rendered its positive assessment.

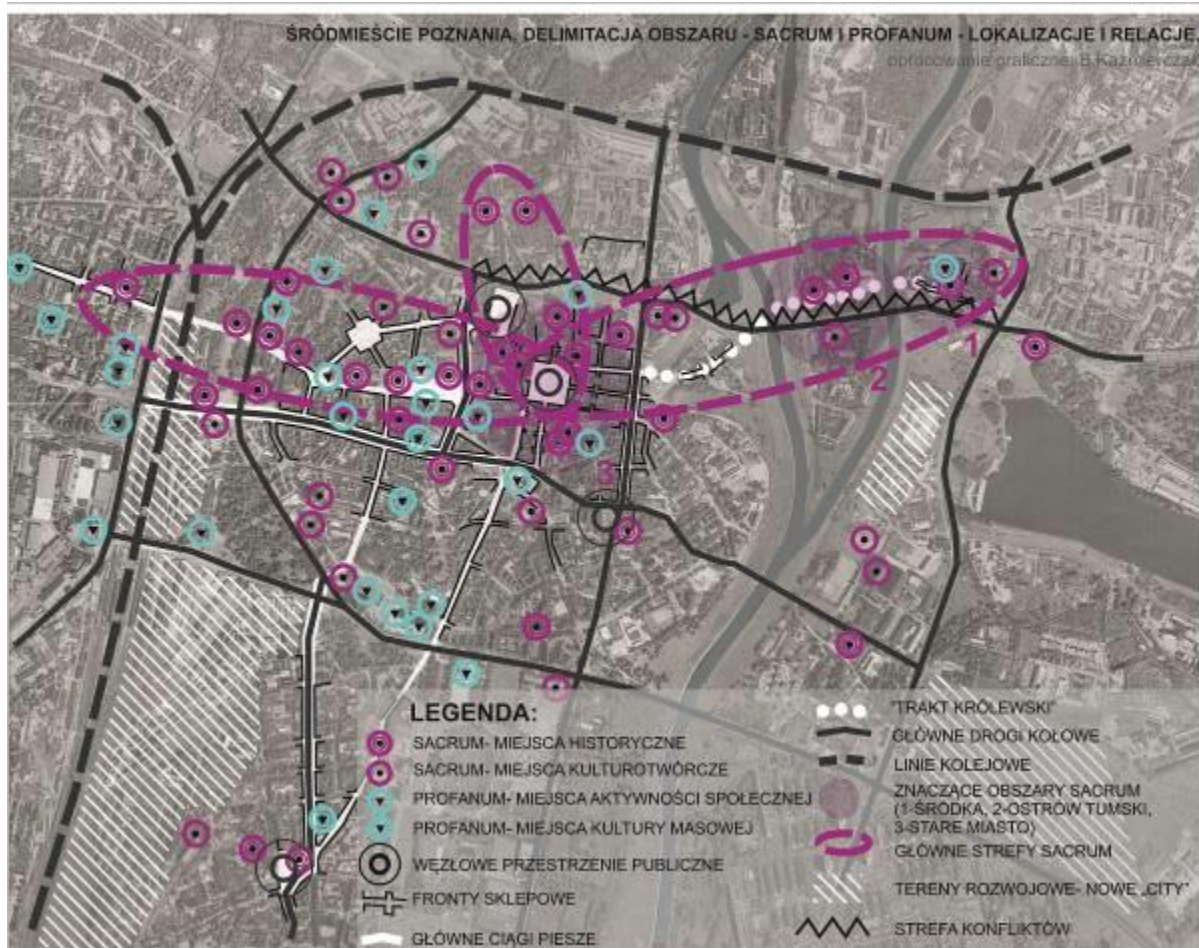
Downtown area is the focal point of urban life as it offers appropriate spatial conditions that can satisfy a variety of social needs. Apart from spatial assets, numerous events (traditional celebrations and occasional festivities, seasonal and regular events) that are organised in downtown space largely contribute to its attractiveness. On top of features characteristic of the city centre, Poznan downtown areas are also furnished with such visual marketing aids as: declaratory nature, interest sparking nature, communication of traditions and innovations, demonstration of prestige and culture and traceability. All these aspects meet the requirement of the DESIRE model. The empirical research made by the authors hereof has confirmed the foregoing.

The aforementioned features represent key assets of today's downtown areas in Poznan, unfortunately, such features are only demonstrated by the old town development as it must be remembered that downtown is structurally non-homogeneous. Apart from highly attractive parts, there are still degraded areas in the downtown zone (post-industrial and post-industrial railway areas) that require immediate intervention. Lack of spatial integration between *the sacred* parts of high cultural value, i.e. Ostrów Tumski, Śródka and the Old Market Square, is a weak side of the downtown area. Another weakness is the broken continuation of historical development of the Royal-Imperial Route due to the construction of the fast traffic highway in the 1960s-1970s, which has caused irrecoverable damage to the smooth of flow of pedestrian traffic between these key areas (Fig. 2 - zone of conflicting interests)

downtown - the sacred and the profane.case study of poznan, poland.

We shall remember that the areas designated for the new *city* still require relevant spatial development through the activation of the western part of downtown (wolne tory [area between Wilda and Łazarz district] and inclusion of the Varta river bank into expanded downtown area, in this its right bank area (campus of Poznan University of Technology in Piotrowo). To improve the condition of downtown in Poznan, the authorities need to revitalise the post-industrial complexes of buildings (the old gas house and the old slaughter house) as well as part of Chwaliszewo district, a buffer zone between the Old Town and the Varta river. It is recommendable for the *new* city structure design to respect the scale of the historical downtown. Thus, new office towers and skyscrapers, even if essential determinants of the *new* city image, should refrain from interfering into the view of the existing silhouette of the old town.

The presentation of the issues of transformations and development of downtown in Poznan included herein is far from exhaustive. It may be deemed as a starting point for further research on an area of key importance for the Poznan metropolis, and as a guide to new research methods intended for the facilitation of reliable assessment of downtown space quality that will allow the authorities to make appropriate decisions in the area of shaping space.



Map explanations:

the sacred – historical places	the Royal-Imperial Route
the sacred – centres of culture	main road transport routes

the profane – community centres	railway lines
the profane – centres of mass culture	high value sacred areas (1 – Śródka, 2 – Ostrów Tumski, 3- Old Town)
public space hubs	main zones of the sacred
commercial frontage	areas under development – new city
main pedestrian traffic routes	zone of conflicting interests

Fig. 2 Poznan downtown, delimitation of the sacred and the profane - locations and relations.

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