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## **Analysing Public Policies on a Local Level: Reflection of Several Patterns in the Case of Public Transport in Pilsen**

### *Abstract*

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVE:** options and threats on a local level policy formulation, especially in a phase of its formulation through declared priorities created by stakeholders.

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**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS:** unclear relation between stakeholders and their hierarchy in the case, and unknown options how to improve examination process between them; about method, content analysis is used in the defined case (case study).

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**THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION:** starts with content analysis of all documents about public transportation in Pilsen, continues with stakeholder relation analysis and summarizing patterns of public policy creation which depict possible problems – options how to solve them followed.

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**RESEARCH RESULTS:** there is a mutual harmony of public transport documents in Pilsen, but it depends on one stakeholder without proper rule to make the final decision in policy formulation; research options could be focus on informal practises; there could be problem with a lack of information if the whole policy is depended on one stakeholder (analytically informant), who do not want to participate.

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**CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** to combine formal information in examined documents with adding informal

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perceptions of stakeholders (non-structured interviews are recommended); to distinguish stakeholders with direct decision making power from those, who “only” prepare strategies; to focus on agenda setting of those stakeholders that prepare strategies – they formulate problem, so they create policy informally.

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### KEYWORDS

content analysis, local public policy, Pilsen, public transport, stakeholder analysis

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Many sectoral public policies in the Czech Republic (nevertheless, the Czech Republic is a highly centralized country) are implemented on a local level, i.e. on the level of one of the country's fourteen regions or on the municipal level (The Constitution of the Czech Republic, 1993, article no. 99). Each region or city with more than one hundred thousand residents formulates its own sectoral public policies; this, however, is not done in all possible sectors and sometimes (in the case of the smallest towns) it is not completely clear what has been formulated in the strategy, what is the plan or what are merely simple comments resulting from the discussions of council members.<sup>1</sup>

Target of a case study in policy analysis is to make clear a hierarchy of various documents with regard to research objective, despite mentioned problems. In this article, this starting point consists from spatial plans that regulate the use of public spaces and give us specific information about the possible implementations of different policies in defined area. Thus, it is useful to begin exposing the created patterns in these kinds of documents, because the majority of cities

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1 This fact may complicate the analysis of planned policies, but we can focus on the role of each document in a context and its rationality (see John, 2006, pp. 23-25, 34; see Brugha & Varvasovszky, 2000, p. 240), and for revealing some patterns among the documents in order to gain a better understanding of the hierarchy of mentioned strategies created by the stakeholders (see Brugha & Varvasovszky, 2000, p. 241). All documents contain preferences and targets and we can recognize the possible source of a public problem before the stakeholders' negotiation thanks to content analysis (see Kraft & Furlong, 2015, p. 93-95).

in the Czech Republic possess such plans. After that there will be researched all of the strategic documents, which solve the public transport policy in Pilsen. The common research problem is this: unclear relation between stakeholders, mentioned documents, and formal and also informal hierarchy in decision making.

The aim of this study is to point out on the options and possible problems in analysing strategic (in a broad sense) documents (without the possibility of having a proper definition, its ontology and uncovering hidden problems) on a local level<sup>2</sup> of negotiation in the case study of public transport in Pilsen. The article is divided into three main sections. The first section is based on a brief content analysis of documents from the field of public transport. Second displays relations between stakeholders and shows where and how could we find some patterns of public policy creation in the early phase, i.e. the phase of its formulation through declared priorities created by stakeholders. This section is also focused on the mutual harmony/disharmony of mentioned documents and contexts which may be confusing in analysis. The third section summarizes analytical options and analytical problems.

It is necessary to provide boundaries of the case for a proper understanding and to keep a viewpoint on the study aim. The place of focus is the City of Pilsen. Pilsen is the largest city in the Pilsen Region (one of the fourteen regions of the Czech Republic) and has a population of more than one hundred and seventy thousand. It is a self-governing city which has ten city districts with their own district council and local governments. Thus, we can recognize two main stakeholders of the Statutory City of Pilsen – the central city council and several district councils (The Statutory City of Pilsen, document no. 8, 2001). The analysed timeframe can be defined between 1996 and 2018. In 1996 the Transport Policy Principles of Pilsen was published, which is a basic and brief document defining the city's vision for transport. The year 2018 marked the date of publication of an updated General Conception for Calm Transport, a comprehensive

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<sup>2</sup> Additionally and for broader context: in the Czech Republic policy studies are oriented primarily on the holistic interpretation of central policies, such as the retirement system (see Potůček et al., 2016) or educational policy (Kalous & Veselý, 2006). The local level and transport are not so typical and may open further scientific debate about research level.

document devoted to parking and its overlap into public transport. It is, however, only possible to infer preferred stakeholders from this document. A similar general conception of public transport does not exist. The purpose of these documents and documents issued in the meantime is to solve the largest transport problem associated with the concept of public transport, which is the lack of transport capacity in Pilsen's city centre.

## 2. STRATEGIES IN MUNICIPAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT

There are many strategies in municipal public transport. The most vast is *the General Conception for Calm Transport in Pilsen* (hereinafter "General Conception") published in 2012. The General Conception was updated in 2016 and 2018. The General Conception must be in line with the *Strategic Municipal Plan* from 2016, and those documents should be also in the line with the *Spatial Plan of Pilsen* from 2016. In addition, there are also two less important documents that can serve as harmonization for all stakeholders: the *Principles for City Transport Development* (2011) and *the Transport Policy Principles of Pilsen* (1996). The content of all mentioned documents is summarized to next Table 1.

## 3. STAKEHOLDERS – DESCRIPTION AND RELATIONS

### 3.1. Pilsen, Pilsen districts, PMDP and POVED

Pilsen has ten local municipal districts which have the option of formulating their own policies. City districts (called UMO in Czech) may provide (and consult) their comments on city policies. These policies are prepared by central city departments (which are guided by the policy of the city council for the whole city). They create limited actions such as financial aid for young athletes, organizations for retirees, etc., and implement directives from the city council (the Statutory City of Pilsen, 2001; see, for instance, UMO3 and UMO2 targets and competencies on their website, via Sources).

Table 1

Documents from the most to less important	From	Document description	Main objectives	Additional relation to transport	Purpose
The Spatial plan	2016	The basic philosophy of the City Council in spatial planning	The harmonization of environmental issues with traffic infrastructure, development of suburbs, etc.	Prescribes harmonization between public transport, communication networks, etc.; defines all public transport routes and all parking forms	Serves for basic orientation and regulation in spatial planning
The Transport Policy Principles of Pilsen	1996	The vision of the city of Pilsen in the coordination of transport policies	Public transport (PT) is prioritized at the expense of individual car traffic (ICT)	Two priorities in PT: an acceptable price, and the quality of traveling	To make PT the preferred mode of transport in the city centre
Principles for City Transport Development	2011	Detailed description of all modes of transport	P+R parking; the need for PT transport hubs (for increasing passenger comfort); the purchase of low-floor vehicles; the preference of tram connections in the most overloaded areas; the concept of intelligent stops to raise awareness of PT; links to other modes of transport such as ICT and parking or cycling; Suburban train transport	Mutual connection between parking, PT and its kinds	A tool for higher planning efficiency
The General Conception for Calm Transport in Pilsen	2012, 2016, 2018	Mostly a technical description	Definition of places for P+R (with schemes) and lists its purpose and planned policy effect on traffic regulation in the city centre; a P+G conception; a definition of parking in the paid-parking zone; restrictions description in paid-parking zones and suggest higher fees for parking	List of tools for calm transport necessary for harmonization of PT a ICT policies; precision of the role of PMDP	Technical and spatial definition
The Strategic City Plan	2016	Focused on transport in Pilsen in a nontechnical manner	To respond to the trends of reducing the number of passengers in public transport, to cooperate with investors in transport facilities (the Pilsen Region, the Road and Motorway Directorate, and the SZDC) and further develop the regulation system	Description of regulatory (paid parking areas) and motivational (parking P+R and P+G) approaches, which must be fully functional	Harmonization of city policies in transport

In addition to these two levels, it should be said that the city council has many organizations and companies that are responsible for their entrusted policy area. They have to communicate and prepare strategies with and for the city council and consider local districts. These municipal organizations include: the Department of IT Support; the Department of European Projects Coordination; the Department of Public Estate Managing; and the Department for Conceptions and City Development (DCCD), which makes strategies in transport (Plzen.eu, 2018). In addition to these organizations, two important companies related to public transport can also be mentioned: Pilsen Public Transport Company (PMDP) and POVED – Organization for Public Transport Planning in Pilsen, which primarily makes schedules in public transport and deals with transport timetables in Pilsen and surrounding neighbourhoods.

PMDP was founded as the provider and operator of the public transport system within the city. It is a joint stock company in which the sole shareholder is the city council (Scheme of Organization PMDP, 2017). The company is managed by the board of directors of the company and is supervised by the PMDP's supervisory board. The supervisory council is composed of politicians that work in various urban structures but not necessarily in the city council (PMDP). PMDP is entirely dependent on the budget that is subsidized by the city and on the implementation of directives that are in the interest of the sole shareholder, i.e. the city. Still, representatives of PMDP are invited to talk with city representatives so that changes can be implemented in accepted strategies and in view of the practical experience of public transport in Pilsen (see Record of Negotiation between the DCCD and PMDP from 10. 2. 2017, 2018).

POVED is owned by Pilsen and the Pilsen Region. According to data from the Commercial Register on the amount of the contribution to the company, the Pilsen Region owned approximately two of the three parts of POVED (Company Register – POVED, 2018). In any case, representatives of the city and the Pilsen Region together make decisions on the company. However, there may be a problem in communication, as elections to the Pilsen Region council are not at the same as those for the city council; thus, there could be disharmony of interest and lack of deliberation in planning between members of different political parties. On the other hand, the company is the

administrator of a specific activity and, for example, within the Supervisory Board of PMDP, the representatives of different political parties are also involved. Information and critical disputes are not available for analysts, which does not, however, mean that they do not exist. In any case, POVED is not a key or primary stakeholder, because the linking of suburban connections to urban ones is a marginal problem.

### 3.2 The Department for Conceptions and City Development (DCCD)

The Department for Conceptions and City Development (DCCD) is responsible for transport system planning for the whole Pilsen. Their strategic planning is divided into three main areas. Firstly, they plan and establish options for the use of more than four hundred kilometres of routes (information service; traffic jam prevention, etc). Secondly, they provide public transport support, which means monitoring the technical condition of routes (mainly tram routes), development of suggestions for information systems like payments via debit/credit card in vehicles, and coordination of schedules and connections between individual car traveling (ICT) and possibilities of reallocation into public transport capacities. The third area is related to car parking. The department prepares and defines several types of car parking as Park & Go (P+G), Park & Ride (P+R), possibly Kiss and Ride (K+R), or classic parking. Moreover, this is either with or without charge. In all of these policies, the DCCD has to coordinate suggested politics with the Pilsen Region, POVED, and PMDP as a limited company and Pilsen as 100% owner. It should ensure that the basic principles in strategies and planning are in line with the Ministry of Regional Development and the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic. The last possible actors are private owners, but only in cases in which something is planned on the grounds of their properties (the Charter of the DCCD, 2017, p. 2; the General Conception for Calm Transport in Pilsen, 2018).

Because of planning areas, the DCCD has created several strategic documents. The most important is the General Conception for Calm Transport in Pilsen, published in 2012 and updated in 2016 and 2018.

A real challenge that appears in the General Conception repeatedly is the P+R concept and its harmonization with transport accessibility from these car parks to public transport towards the centre. On the contrary, the General Conception does not address the B+R (Bike and Ride) phenomenon, which is nevertheless mentioned in more general although strategically binding documents.

### 3.3 Stakeholders' relations according to strategic targets and their interpretation

The case of transport planning and the implementation of relevant policies is quite clear because the relations between political-administrative actors are clear (see Figure 1). However, exceptions may appear and should be identified. In other words, informal exceptions may exist despite clear and formal rules. It is also possible that one of the actors is not obvious. However, this is a weakness of all stakeholder analyses (see Brugha & Varvasovszky, 2000, p. 240).

However, there are two stakeholders who can implement the policies through a binding resolution, allocating funds and launching a tender for building public buildings or communications, purchasing land needed to implement policies, etc. These two actors are the city council and district councils (as a category). These actors are mentioned first in the hierarchy of actors because they show top-down logic in regard to actors' relationships (see Prell, Hubacek, & Reed, 2009, p. 502), as can be seen in Figure 1.

Both of these actors must rely on the trust of local representatives. Given the institutional position, the district council has lower executive powers than the City Council. On the other hand, thanks to elections at the same time to local representative institutions, political representations are similar to their political composition. The similarity of political representation at both levels can lead to the pursuit of integrity in decision making. In addition, it can bring emphasis to negotiation with the aim of mutual and full agreement between the two stakeholders (see the General Concept for Calm Transport in Pilsen, especially Attachment C, 2017). However, such a consensus approach may block the adoption of a strategy or policies due to individual UMO objections. Strategies and policies can

therefore be continually modified. The extreme opposite situation might be that the city council ceases to consider the objections of individual UMOs and pushes the policy from the position of greater institutional power. One option for compromise is that City Council adopts a strategy such as the General Conception technical document, and specific implementation will be left up to the UMO's consideration provided that the basic concept of the General Conception is not denied.

The current state of negotiations between stakeholders suggests a third compromise. Although UMO3 and UMO4 have objections (although of a different kind and weight) to the General Conception (see Resolution of the Council of UMO4 of 14 March 2018, UMO3 Council Negotiation from 12 March 2018), according to the Resolution of the City Representatives (2018) held on April 19 they will "note" all three parts (A, B and C) of the General Conception. It "accepts" only the most important part of A, which can create room for compromise. However, the real meaning of such a decision cannot be verified, which is a side-by-side example of three possible patterns. It is necessary to add that only the Mayor of UMO4, Mr. Chalupný (see also Negotiation of the City Representatives from 19. 4. 2018, 2018) refuses to accept the General Conception.

In any case, the city council and/or local representatives have gradually approved the documents on which there is consensus and their basic priorities are seen as necessary. These are the Spatial Plan (2016), the Strategic City Plan (2016), the Transport Policy Principles of Pilsen (1996), and the Principles for City Transport Development (2011). These documents were co-created thanks to the bureaucracy of the city and DCCD as the city organization responsible for planning. Thanks to the information in the documents described, the DCCD can be included in the stakeholder hierarchy. The DCCD functions as a "service" organization that centrally creates strategies, communicates with all stakeholders, passes on information, and attempts to harmonize all of the strategies already mentioned. It plays a key role in negotiating with the aim of harmonizing the interests of two executive entities whose interests may differ in specific issues concerning the location of transport structures, which are expressions of the implementation of policies – the City Council and UMO.

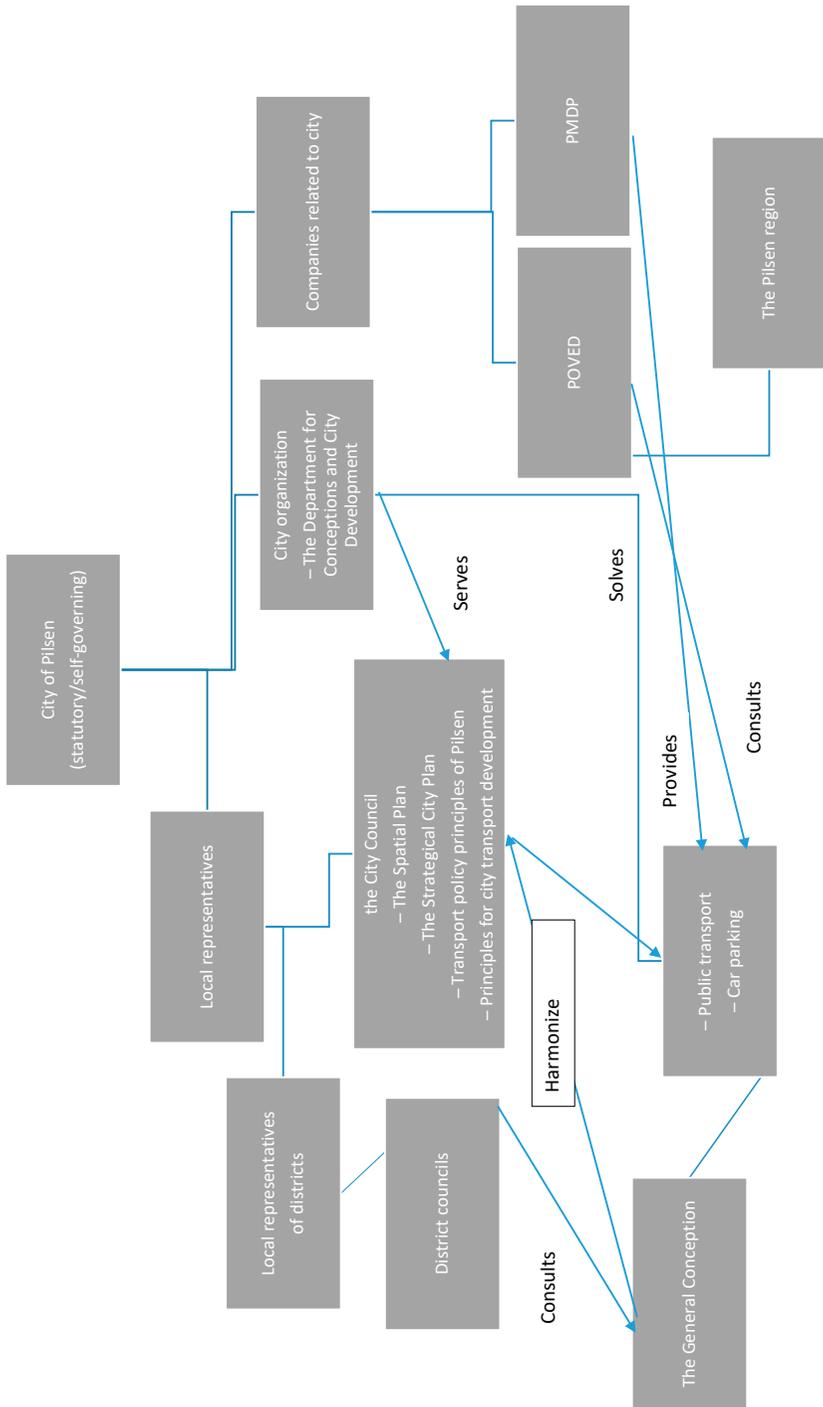


Figure 1

There is no clear and direct institutional bond between the DCCD, local district representatives and PMDP. They do, however, have something in common – they can ask for consultations and consult all the strategies and policies before they are accepted by local representatives of the whole city. The most important actor responsible for negotiating, preparations, harmonization and corrections (if they are needed) is truly the DCCD. However, the DCCD is not responsible for outputs in the form of policies, even if the strategic documents it creates are necessarily based on local representatives. It is a matter of fact that the official comments often cannot be recorded in official form (see the General Conception for Calm Transport in Pilsen, Attachment C, 2017).

It can be assumed that, in addition to constraining superseded strategies, the DCCD acts to a certain extent independently in the planning and preparation of strategic documents, primarily of a technical nature. The link between the actors mentioned in Figure 1 is only mediated and the negotiation of strategic documents and policies is more informal and *ad hoc*. Such relationships create space for a possible disharmony of interest, but it is only possible to estimate the lack of access to informal behaviour. However, some disputes can also be identified through information from the documents examined, such as the identification of areas for new parking, building options for P+G buildings, or the lack of technical feasibility of the B+R concept. Perhaps the largest practical problem that is evident in the subject of this study is the absence of the General Concept for Public Transport in Pilsen (see Figure 1).

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND REFLECTION OF SEVERAL PATTERNS, PROBLEMS AND ANALYTICAL OPTIONS

The content of the documents and the links between the stakeholders in the case of public transport in Pilsen revealed several obvious threats in terms of the disharmony of interests. However, these threats are not key to this text. The patterns, problems and analysis options that can be applied to other cases are essential. It is possible to highlight three options and two analytical problems that include patterns of actors' behaviour resulting from their hierarchy and other

relations. The context of these relations is mainly determined by the content of the documents themselves.

The first option for analysing the case of PT in Pilsen and for other cases is to trace the informal relations between the DCCD, the city council and local representatives of districts. However, monitoring these informal changes would require the acquisition of additional data, mainly obtained through interviews with insiders. Without these data, only changes can be observed in comparison to the first draft of the document examined, but not the informal process of making such a document. While there is a formal hierarchy between actors and some patterns of mutual negotiation can be reproduced, it is necessary to add insights to the actors themselves for a comprehensive understanding of relationships and problems. Interviews (or well-designed questionnaires) are an appropriate tool.

The second option for analysis is to confirm (or not confirm) the harmonization between the city council's strategies and the DCCD (or equivalent organization). This option is especially interesting because it is necessary to distinguish a stakeholder with direct decision-making power from only derived power in the form of administration and processing of a problem (i.e. the DCCD). Such modulation can help improve the scalability of the stakeholder analysis applied to a particular problem. In the case of PT, the strategy must be based on local documents received, so it is also possible to estimate which policies will be elaborated in the strategies and what the DCCD planning framework is not allowed to exceed. This option has been developed as well. However, to make full use of its potential, a sophisticated content analysis (at least two-phase) should be used, but this goes beyond the scope of this article.

The third option is to help the DCCD with the formulation of some kind of general concept of public transport. However, this would be possible through the awareness of informal relations and the creation of a scale of interests for all actors. The actors would be the same as in the case of the General Concept for Calm Transport in Pilsen.

Two possible problems for analysts are reflected in three options. Firstly, it is not easy to reconstruct informal relations between stakeholders because this depends on internal communication that cannot be described "from the outside" (see Prell, Hubacek, & Reed, 2009, pp. 501-502). This is, however, a problem that cannot be fully

addressed. Secondly, there is a dependence on P+R and public transport on one provider, PMDP. On the other hand, this may be the problem, but it is questionable, as the planned combination of parking facilities and worrying about full PT functionality could make it easier to access analyst information. Data from both interconnected areas can be provided by one stakeholder. However, the risk is that one of the stakeholders (PMDP) may decide not to provide and share the data with analysts. This risk, however, is low, as the company is 100% owned by the city, which is represented by politicians in the board of directors and the supervisory board, which have clear responsibilities, including transparency. The risk can be further reduced by a continuous call for the transparency of public institutions. That is the task of both analysts and the rest of the public. On the practical level of the case, it is necessary to add that for the City of Pilsen the function of only one provider of both services is advantageous because the DCCD and PMDP will not have to share information with any other (new) provider/organization.

Using or not using these options and avoiding possible problems depends on what we really want to explore. If we look at the creation of strategic documents with a description of institutional relationships *ex post*, we do not need content analysis or analysis of informal relationships. The result would be an overview of the actors and a description of the documents, which can serve as prevention because of the clarity and transparency of the information before possible policy misinterpretation. However, if we examine the harmony of individual documents, it is necessary to use content analysis. In the case under consideration, the advantage was that there is one stakeholder, the DCCD, which concentrates stakeholder scheduling activities at a city level. A warning about possible disharmony, which would be the goal of such an activity, would only concern one person directly and the information would be passed on quickly. One central actor is not present in all cases and with this we need to be careful. If we are interested in informal relationships that may be the cause of the quick or slow adoption of a strategic document, we need to involve other information gathering techniques and rely on the openness of actors, even if they can be politically controlled and hence also responsible for public interest. The aim would be to explain the problem of the slow adoption of a policy and to explain the function that policy analysis really has.

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