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INTRODUCTION

MULTIPOLAR PATTERNS OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND

Multipolar pattern of settlement network development is regarded in Poland as a primary paradigm, which emerged in the post-war years. The most comprehensive elaboration of this spatial concept took place in the 1970s and is known as moderate polycentric concentration. This idea draws largely on the concept of uniform settlement development, based on Christaller's central place theory. It was assumed that through appropriate policy of even industrialisation of the country an uniform settlement network will be created, thus guaranteeing hierarchical and balanced model of servicing the inhabitants. The socio-economic transformations involved in Poland's transition to a market-based system after 1990 entailed dynamic changes in Polish space. Economic polarisation of the country is intensifying, and as a consequence the population and economic potential of the largest agglomerations is changing. As regards conditions necessary for enhancing the competitiveness of Polish space relative to a broadly defined environment, increasing attention is being devoted to metropolisation of Polish space, multipolar development within the largest agglomerations and interagglomeration links. As a result of new economic, political and spatial challenges, multipolar and bipolar patterns of spatial development in a new, global context have become the subject of numerous researches carried out by individual scholars, university departments or as part of larger projects funded by the government.

This publication contains some results of Polish researches into this field, earlier presented at an international conference on *Multipolar Patterns of Urban Development* organized in Łódź on 4-7 April 2000.

One of principal conclusions arrived at during this meeting was that modern economic development and economic interconnections do

not have a direct correlation with spatial development forms. Functional links do not always have reflection in spatial development to the extent that was typical of the industrial era and even, until recently, characterised post-industrial economy. Therefore a lack of corridors in physically developed space is not indicative of a lack of cooperation between business entities. What is more, functional cooperation between towns might imply development of secondary economic activity in a direction opposite to that of primary (motive) functions. Interagglomeration linkages should be subjected to a multidimensional analysis, covering complex interactions between local government, the sphere of production and services, non-governmental organisations, etc.

These linkages arise as a result of complementary and competitive relations. In the face of growing external competitive pressures it is vital to achieve cooperation and coordination of actions between entities in order to create synergic competitive advantage. The situation becomes normal when entities compete in one field and cooperate in another.

Proper appraisal of new phenomena necessitates integrated research in the fields of geography, town-planning, economy and society. Only then will it be possible to gain more insight into actual cause-effect relationships and to work out proper recommendations with regard to spatial policy. The papers presented in this publication address a number of important issues relating to the competitive position of Polish space, including intra- and interagglomeration cooperation.

The competitiveness of Polish space is analysed mainly in the context of its nearest external geographical environment. This means that, first, the competitiveness can be measured in relation to the potential of the external environment and, second, to a certain degree it may be determined by the specific features of this environment.

The experience of Western countries suggests that the competitive position of regions depends mainly on the position of their main urban centres, which perform the function of the driving force of development, including innovation transmission (absorption of external innovations followed by generation of influence on entities located in the surrounding zones). Appropriately developed urban agglomerations are a factor protecting the surrounding areas against periferization.

Z. Ziobrowski, in the article *The influence of external urban centres on the competitiveness of Polish space* considers the questions of assessment of the competitive advantage of large urban centres external to Poland's territory relative to Polish agglomerations. Their competitiveness has been evaluated using a number of indicators, which can be

classified into two groups: (1) characterising the competitive potential and (2) identifying potential for further strengthening of their competitive advantage. Analysis of these indicators has shown that for the Warsaw–Łódź zone the strongest competition comes from the Berlin agglomeration (also on the national scale), while competition from Vienna, Prague and Budapest is weaker (and limited to the supranational scale). The least competitive capitals in this part of Europe in relation to Łódź and Warsaw are Bratislava, Minsk, Kiev and Vilnius – these urban centres do not exert direct impact on Polish space. Some of the remaining minor urban centres surrounding Poland have some effect, but on a regional scale. For example, the impact of Dresden and Leipzig relative to Poznań–Wrocław group may be expected to become stronger in the future. This is also the case with Lubeka and Rostock and Gdańsk–Szczecin system. Z. Ziobrowski concludes that in this situation Polish agglomerations should intensify cooperation in the bipolar system.

M. Poniatowska-Jaksch, in her paper *Local development in bipolar zones (the case of Warsaw and Łódź)* analyses opportunities for growth of the Łódź–Warsaw metropolitan region in the context of local determinants. The creation of regional cooperative links with a central role of two large cities would be beneficial, which has not been realised or recognised by local authorities in communes located in Warsaw’s suburban zone. Ability to develop territorial solidarity and cooperative links between local entities constitutes a barrier rather than stimulus of the processes of integration and creation of a metropolitan region.

T. Pakulska discusses the results of research on *The application of the gravity model to delimiting zones of influence of urban centres (on the example of Warsaw)*. For this purpose she used a gravity model based on three variables relating to the mass of the areas in question and affecting the strength of their interactions with Warsaw (population size, size of the working population and number of business entities). On the basis of the analysis the author has established that Warsaw’s zone of influence comprises 36 towns located in 13 districts (powiat). Only two districts in Warsaw’s sphere of influence (the Sochaczew and Żyrardów districts) have some linkages, though weak, with Łódź. A likely barrier to developing stronger interaction with this city is poor transport accessibility of Łódź.

In view of globalisation and progressing IT civilisation it seems very important to emphasise those elements and spatial phenomena which constitute the cultural identity of a place. This problem is

addressed by B. Sierecka-Nowakowska in a paper on *Historical and cultural determinants of spatial development of Central Poland in the context of European metropolitan system*. In her opinion the value of a place should be assessed not only from the present perspective, but also in terms of its potential future value. In the face of growing uniformity in present spatial development, cultural heritage may affect our growth chances to a greater degree than we are now aware of. The paper presents the assets of the cultural space of Central Poland, that is the Łódź region, in terms of potential for development in a new spatial system, in accordance with new tendencies in the shaping of large-scale structures as well as supralocal and supraregional interactions. The author indicates opportunities for integrating the existing cultural space values into the European system of metropolization as a complement to the Warsaw node's network of flows, which will replace the hierarchical settlement structure in the near future. In the context of the determinants of Poland's broad integration into European structures in accordance with the country's infrastructural needs and metropolitan system it is essential to identify possibilities of adaptation of existent values of space and culture. Through analysis of natural assets, material and non-material culture, settlement evolution, territorial structures and transport systems it is possible to recognise cultural factors as elements integrating and complementing the entire superior system. The author argues that methodological and empirical foundations should be created for the development of Polish space in the European context according to the principle of place identity protection.

A similar issue is addressed by M. Żukowska in a paper on *The milieu of historic cities as a factor of their attractiveness and development*. The main aim of the paper is to show what functions can develop in historic cities and determine their growth pattern.

A research team made up of M. Borska, S. Denkiewicz, B. Koloch, M. Strojcka-Gevorgyan, K. Wrańska and T. Marcinów (Katowice, Poland) analyses *Opportunities and barriers to cooperation between metropolitan centres of south-west Poland*. They argue, among other things, that it is a challenge of contemporary Poland to integrate with the economic and social structures of the West and diminish the development gap between Poland advanced market economies. One of the crucial issues in this context is whether Polish agglomerations are able to compete with other European metropolitan regions and how to improve the competitiveness of Polish urban regions. It is possible to indicate five potential bipolar development regions being able to play an important role in the

space of the European continent, among them Kraków–Katowice and Poznań–Wrocław.

J. Zaucha and W. Szydarowski describe competitive and cooperative interactions in the Szczecin–Tri-City system. They argue that the Pomerania region, due to its economic difficulties, offers limited growth opportunities to local communities, while agglomerations of Szczecin and Tricity (Gdańsk, Gdynia, Sopot) located on two edges of the region aspire to being an important element of the global economy. The research carried out by the authors suggests that bipolar cooperation between these agglomerations will strengthen their competitiveness as well as the status of the whole Pomerania region on the international forum. It will also amplify development impulses in the space between the two agglomerations (upon the condition of having established transmission channels from the agglomerations areas).

Between the Szczecin and Tri-City agglomerations there is a potentially strong impulse – transmitting system – two medium-sized cities situated in close proximity to each other. E. Wiśniewski analyses this issue in the article *Economic cooperation in the Koszalin–Kołobrzeg bipolar zone*. These cities are located in the West-Pomeranian voivodship. The Szczecin agglomeration is the principal urban centre of this newly-designated voivodship, whereas the capital of the former Koszalin voivodship is now in a less favourable situation. The author is of the opinion that one of possible solutions permitting reduction of inequalities in the spatial structure of the new voivodship is creation of a second (besides the Szczecin agglomeration) growth pole in its north-eastern part in the form of a bipolar cooperative area Koszalin–Kołobrzeg. A condition of success and efficiency of the new Koszalin–Kołobrzeg system (cities 44 km distant from each other) is introduction of new management principles – new supralocal institutions should be established capable of flexible action and promoting quality, innovativeness and cooperation with and between local authorities.

M. Skrupski, J. Suchta and W. Żebrowski outline spatial development of Olsztyn viewed from a historical perspective in a paper entitled *The poles of Olsztyn development*. The authors draw attention to the unique character of the spatial structure of the city resulting from the specific conditions of its geographical environment (lay-out of the land, surface waters, forests, etc.). The authors point out the fact that although Olsztyn is a relatively small city, new quasi-poles of growth are emerging in selected rural areas in communes surrounding the old urbanised area.

In a paper entitled *Regional zones of settlement concentration in*

Lublin voivodship M. Ponikowski finds, among other things, that as far as regional space competitiveness enhancement is concerned, a special role is played by urban agglomerations and large cities as spatial growth poles, capable of generating broadly understood innovations. The competitive position of a region largely depends on the extent of influence, expansion, penetration and attractive power of the capital and main urban centres of the region. In the case of the Lublin region, Lublin, Chełm, Zamość, Biała Podlaska and Puławy are the leading multifunctional centres of regional importance.

K. Milewska in the paper *Differences in the housing policy in the Łódź agglomeration* explores the issue of spatial similarities in the Łódź agglomeration's sphere of influence. Recent years have seen an intensive growth of housing construction for non-agricultural population in communes neighbouring with Łódź. Designation of settlement zones in areas with attractive environmental conditions and good transport connections is designed to provide an inducement for the inhabitants of Łódź to build in suburban areas. By allocating, in development plans, land for residential purposes and for recreational building, communes stress their attractiveness in this respect. This is in line with commonly observed tendencies towards moving from intensively urbanised areas to suburban zones. Apart from creation of new spatial structures through introduction of residential land uses to non-urban areas, an important and frequent occurrence is continuation of the existing settlement structures and preservation of the values of the existent housing development. In the planning documents local authorities make decisions designed to create spatial conditions for the required housing stock increment. The Łódź agglomeration is an area where spatial differentiation is clearly visible, both in respect of the character of spatial processes and housing policies adopted in studies of determinants and directions of spatial development, which must constitute an integral part of local development strategy. Formulation of spatial policy allows prediction of the effects of present decisions, thus facilitating the making of right policy choices depending on the stated objectives. Generally, main directions of local government activities with respect to spatial development include primarily designation of land for adaptation and for new housing. On the basis of conducted research administrative units in the area under study have been classified into three main groups, using the criterion of the type of dominating spatial policy regarding housing. Classification of communes into particular classes depended on both qualitative and quantitative characteristics. Three

types of housing policies defined in local plans of spatial development have been identified:

- expansive policy, oriented towards attracting outside investors and inhabitants of their communes;
- reactive policy, oriented towards balanced development of the housing function relative to other functions;
- maintenance policy, oriented towards qualitative development, that is upgrading of the existing housing stock;

The papers collected in this volume address topical issues relating to current trends in settlement network development in Poland. The experience accumulated in the course of the research conducted and presented in this publication represents a significant contribution to rational spatial policy formulation, creating conditions for realisation of benefits arising from cooperation within the framework of multipolar models of development.