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SHAPING OF METROPOLIZATION PROCESS IN POLAND – THEORETICAL ASPECT

Abstract: The elaboration concerns the issue of metropolization which is related to the biggest and most economically developed cities. The purpose of the article is to describe the evolution of the basis of this process in Poland. In the beginning, the definition of metropolization was defined in the light of the literature of the subject. Secondly, the theoretical basis and the main streams of research of the widely understood concept of urban development were described. They constitute a basic contribution in acquiring and systematizing the knowledge in the area of urban development, settlement systems, as well as researching the spatial-functional structures. The most important economic factors which influenced the development of metropolization in Poland were analysed. In order to elucidate the research streams, a review of the Polish literature of the subject was done, recognizing three aspects of metropolization: spatial, functional and network ones. The conclusion of the elaboration presents the legal state of the metropolitan areas in Poland.

Key words: metropolization, metropolises, metropolitan area, urban studies

JEL codes: F63, N94, O18, P25, R58

1. Introduction

Processes of metropolization are characteristic for the areas of the highest level of economic development. Their presence denotes an advanced phase of development and an excess of significance of geographic space, in juxtaposition with areas of lesser influence. The cities labelled as metropolises, being the nodes of networks of interconnections, are contemporarily the main area of interest of international companies. They also shape a very complex system of interconnections not only on their own area, but also with very distant metropolises in remote parts of the world.

The purpose of the elaboration is to highlight the evolution of the process of metropolization in Poland. This purpose is realized through:

- analysing the theoretical bases in the scope of urban settlement which have contributed to proper understanding of the occurring phenomena in the geographic space,
- indicating the geographic conditions which have had an influence on its development,
- highlighting the research issues of the scope of metropolization in the Polish literature of the subject and governmental documents.

2. The notion of metropolization

In order to elaborate on the way of evolution of the processes of metropolization in Poland, it is indispensable to highlight its theoretical framework.

The processes of metropolization arise within metropolises and are related to metropolitan areas. On one hand, they are subject to an increase of the functional significance of major cities, which results from the arrangement and economic interrelations of the world's biggest corporations, on the other hand, they portray the new geography of centrality – the strategic places in the world's economic system (Sassen, 2007). It is a multi-scope process in which reinforcement of the most developed cities occurs – global, international cities (Friedmann, 1986, Sassen, 1991) and agglomerations in the global system of settlement hierarchy (Hall, 1966, Hall, Pain, 2006). Through metropolises, aerial geography is introduced not only into the global, but also continental, sub-continental and international network of relations.

The processes of globalization contributed to the creation of international cities and accompanying processes of metropolization (Sassen, 1994, Jałowicki 1999) which are their causative power (Maik, 2003, Parysek, 2003). Therefore, metropolization is a global phenomenon reflected in urban space.

“Metropolization of space combines with the occurrence of metropolises. Metropolization creates metropolises, in turn, they “create” (metropolize) metropolitan areas. The occurrence of metropolises is a condition of activation of the metropolization process surrounding metropolization of space. Metropolization may indicate the influence of a metropolis on the surrounding space, both directly neighbouring the metropolis, as well as embracing the entire world”. Markowski (2013) calls metropolization of space a spatial form of globalization. Metropolization of space is a specific reaction of a settlement system on flows occurring between metropolitan centres. Therefore, it constitutes a complex process of shaping of a new spatial and functional structure which achieves an international rank (Markowski, Marszał, 2006, 2007a, 2007b). The growth of global financial markets and trans-national corporations indicates the creation of an initial stage of trans-national urban system (Sassen, 1991, Knox, Taylor 1995). This process is linked to the development of metropolitan functions which are determined by decentralization and deglomeration (Liszewski, 2008). Metropolization can be defined as a process of multipolar development of a city in terms of higher level services on supraregional levels of cooperation with other metropolises (Przestrzeń..., 2013).

Korcelli (2008) defines the process of metropolization of economy and society as a concentration of investment and modern business activities in major cities, as well as their functional areas, selective inflow of migration to these centres and areas, increasing their human resources, at the expense of the out-of-urban areas, especially the peripheral ones.

Grzeszczak (1999 after Dunfort, Benko 1991) calls metropolis a new kind of polarization which is conditioned by resources of individual metropolises, especially the infrastructural ones. To certain extent it explains that in many developed parts of the world, the described processes exist for a long period of time, but in Poland and other post-soviet republics metropolises and metropolization are not developed.

The spatial structures in Poland currently undergoing development, being the next phase of development of the settlement system, provoke thoughts in the topic of new functional-spatial forms, such as metropolitan area or metropolitan region.

Metropolization is not only a complex process, but also conditioned by many factors (Markowski, 2006).

3. On the path to metropolization – theoretical basis

Raising the issue of metropolization in Poland, it must be indicated that urban settlement network shaped under the influence of different factors. Many authors, including Janiszewski (1991), Liszewski and Maik (2000), or Szymańska (2007, 2009), are of the opinion that in the initial phase of development, of determinative importance were the natural values, yielding gradually to socio-economic values. In Poland, an essential factor restraining development of the free market economy, and at the same time proper shaping of the process of metropolization, was the socialist economic system present for over forty years. It was a significant barrier hindering mechanisms of exchange and competitiveness of cities in the European area.

In Poland, the beginning of the discussions over the issue of metropolization ought to be linked with the works of Korcelli (1976) who, researching agglomerations in settlement network, raised the issue of daily urban systems. Referring to the work of Bourne and Simmons (1978), he described the inner structure of an urban area as a hierarchic system surrounding a dominant agglomeration. In this research period, interrelations of urban agglomerations were linked with the notion of metropolitan center (according to Western examples). This theoretical discussion did not go hand in hand with the factual development of Polish cities in terms of metropolises. The issue was very innovative, however, at that time, there were no metropolitan centers, and the regional cities did not keep pace with the development of the largest European cities. It resulted from the fact of underdevelopment of the Polish economy which was centrally planned according to socialist principles. This led to a factual civilizational retardation and, as it is known, to a crisis in our country, the consequence of which was the socio-economic transformation.

It the literature of geography, all research dedicated to cities has contributed, in a lesser or greater scope, to the development of a theoretical basis of metropoliza-

tion. However, review of research concepts of urban settlement geography, which are supported by broad literature, the issue is related to, most of all, large cities, including urban agglomerations. Therefore, of particularly broad theoretical and methodological application in the issue of metropolization, were three directions of research. According to the author, they played a fundamental role in the development of theoretical bases of the biggest cities in Poland, including the current and future metropolises. The aforementioned are:

- 1) concepts and processes of urbanization,
- 2) research of settlement systems,
- 3) functional-spatial research.

All of the research streams are of utmost importance in shaping theoretical bases of cities and for proper understanding of settlement processes, including the metropolitan ones (Liszewski, 1993). Much attention has been paid in Polish literature of the subject to the research of a genesis of urban agglomerations and delimitation of agglomerations (Iwanicka-Lyra, 1969), as well as the research methods of their development (Korcelli, 1978). It is particularly important since the metropolization processes are connected with the metropolitan areas which genetically originate from urban agglomerations or conurbations. Initial works of Dziewoński and Kosiński (1964) formulated urban agglomeration as an area of spatial concentration of a population, and were consecutively continued by other researchers in the successive decades, to name but a few: Iwanicka-Lyra (1969), Dziewoński (1971), Eberhard and Herman (1973), Korcelli (1976), Rykiel (1978), and Maik (1993). While research works sometimes lacks conformity and consists of imprecise usage of some terms related to the topic, which is pointed out by Liszewski (2008) and Czyż (2009), it may be assumed that the metropolitan agglomeration is a simple form of urban cluster undergoing forming as a big city of a monocentric arrangement (Liszewski, 2005, 2008, 2010). On the other hand, according to Korcelli (1973), the notion of urban agglomeration can be related to an advanced study of settlement system development, and includes primarily a morphologic aspect. Moreover, it can be associated with an urbanized area.

Urban agglomerations ought to be associated with metropolitan settlement systems. On the other hand, metropolitan areas appear as a result of their transformation, the reason being civilization development. The area enters a phase of economic development based on broadly understood services, including the higher-category ones. It is characteristic for post-industrial economies. For this theoretical context, elaborations by Korcelli referred to the newest trends in international metropolitan research of that time, however they could not be applied in the Polish conditions, since the basis of development of Poland was industry. Therefore, it was a phase of industrial development, “pre-metropolitan” – as it might be named. The industrialization phase ought to be understood as a preceding phase to the post-industrial phase which is based on services (servitisation). Therefore, the metropolization process could start in Poland no sooner than upon transformation from the industrial phase to the post-industrial phase. The economic transformation started in Poland in 1989, and its results in a broader context might be noticed towards the end of the nineties of the twentieth century. It must be added that the process was

not uniform in the entire country, and of course the area of diffusion of innovation was the most developed city in Poland of social functions – Warsaw. Up till now, the system transformation has not finished in full extent, and multiple areas in the country face numerous economic problems. Therefore, from a practical point of view, the studies concerning metropolization, metropolises, metropolitan areas prior to the transformation process, *i.e.* after 1990, could only be of a theoretical, not applicable, manner.

It is worth mentioning that the issue of urban agglomerations was not only an essential research element, but also a planning one. Great importance was attached to works of researchers, results of their studies, as well as guidelines in terms of delimitation of these areas and their role in settlement systems, as well as in the entire economy. Central Statistical Office introduced delimitations of metropolitan areas in the seventies on the twentieth century (Gontarski, 1980). However, it has to be remembered that these areas were identified as urban agglomerations, which were the basis to present and understand the undergoing changes in the settlement system of Poland. In fact, the appearance of complex settlement systems of large cities, strong internal and external interrelations, as well as the metropolitan functions tailored to the contemporary metropolitan areas, took place after the year of 2000, with variable force throughout Poland.

Korcelli (1976), making references to the international studies on urban development, including the functional urban area, a very innovative issue for that time, points to the fact that the concept of metropolitan area represents a functional conceptualization (1974, 1976). It is a major difference distinguishing it from an urban agglomeration which separates itself according to the morphologic approach. A metropolitan area is a system of interrelations based on a transfer of people, commodities, capital, information. It is formed by a major – central – city, hence a metropolitan center or a metropolis, but what is important is that it is also formed by a collection of settlement units strongly integrated with it functionally and spatially. Speaking directly, this system is composed of the biggest city, medium cities, small towns, as well as rural municipalities, which are all interrelated. In many self-governing environments in Poland, a view is held that small towns and rural municipalities cannot form a metropolitan area, which is not true. If the interrelation and transfer exist, municipalities of a smaller number of inhabitants also constitute a metropolitan area. Korcelli (1976) points to the fact that this area can be understood as a functional urban area, a city, an area, or a local settlement system.

4. Economic conditions of the metropolization process in Poland

The pace of development of metropolization in Poland is various, depending on the advancement of development of metropolitan functions in the biggest cities. It might be assumed that this process commenced in the nineties in Warsaw. In other

major urban centers it was noticeable after 2000, therefore it might be associated with the beginning of the 21st century. This fact is reflected in the Polish literature of the subject.

Therefore the question can be asked: what was the factor responsible for the process of metropolization to begin?

Analyzing the factors which might have contributed to the development of these processes, and which are related to large cities, it turns out that this question cannot be answered directly. It results from the fact that after 2000, overlapping of different economic, and even politic, aspects took place. It appears that two groups of factors were of utmost importance: endogenic and exogenic.

The first group (of internal factors) might include:

- 1) economic transformation and introduction of the free-market principles, the derivative of which was economic growth, increasing wealth of society, as well as launching of fundamental economic principles, such as the increase of land rent (price of land);
- 2) gradual transformation of economy from the industrial to the post-industrial phase, which was related to the development of the service sector;
- 3) acceleration of individual motorization in the country;
- 4) "urban policy" – drawing attention to the issue of metropolises as growth poles, as well as including this issue in National Spatial Concept.

The exogenic (external) factors which played the major role, were:

- 1) foreign economic investment thanks to which Poland and regional cities – potential metropolises, were included in the network of international companies and global concerns,
- 2) globalization of economy, including trade and a new models of spatial organization and management,
- 3) inflow of external capital through financing of the urban infrastructure, transport, as well as redevelopment of old spaces, which contributed to the removal of civilizational retardations,
- 4) accession of Poland to the European Union (2004) and gradual adjustment of regulations of law, directives, as well as accumulation of statistical data comparable with other European countries, which contributed to a diagnosis of the state of Polish cities, as compared to other European cities.
- 5) free access to the Internet, mobile telephony, as well as communication means, thanks to which the possibility of information flow, not only between the largest cities, but the entire world, as well as liberty in long distance travel (air travel), increased.

It is difficult to univocally pinpoint the beginning of this period, since metropolization is a multi-dimensional process, and its symptoms can be noticed in different spheres of the socio-economic life. In order to answer the question what indicates the process of metropolization to occurs in a given area, it has to be noticed that in Poland it is a consequence of two other processes: socio-economic transformation and the process of globalization. The transformation activated numerous changes, among the others socio-economic ones, restructuring processes, ownership processes, an increase in wealth of the society and, as a consequence, suburbanization

processes. These widely understood transformation processes co-occurred with the process of globalization.

The socialist system could be characterized by shortages of many features attributable to a free-market economy. One of which was the lack of a land rent, thus the real value of land. The following can also be included in the group: defiance of value of space, underdevelopment of transportation infrastructure, lack of regulations of the free-market economy, technological retardation, as well as a wide variety of other features which limited proper development of the economy at all, including urban economy (Gaczek, 2000, Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz, 2001, 2009).

Globalization and transformation revealed new phenomena. One of the essential elements was the creation of, or rather introduction or expansion, a network of large-format trade in Polish market, being property of multinational corporations (Wilk, 2005, Gwosdz, Sobala-Gwosdz, 2008, Zuzńska-Żyśko, 2010, Duś, Zuzńska-Żyśko, 2013). The expansion of trade commenced in the biggest and the most developed cities in Poland – Warsaw, Kraków, Poznań. The shopping centers present in Poland for almost 20 years appear to be a permanent element of urban landscapes. In Silesia, the first trade center M1 (Czeladź) was built no sooner than in 1997 (Kłosowski, 2002). With reason, the generation born in the nineties is referred to as “the generation of supermarkets”. Changes in Poland in terms of economic sphere were eminent. Foreign investment in industry commenced, which consequently resulted in a need of presence of outsourcing companies, as well as others. The new investment started to be a diffusion of innovation for the immediate and surrounding areas. The investment sector, initially present in the area of industry (assembly, industrial elements production) was complemented with international branches of service companies related to insurances, financing, real estate, and currently almost every category of the economic life (Domański, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2010).

As a consequence of these changes, the space of Polish cities was undergoing widely-understood economic transformation. Redevelopment of the functional-spatial structures of cities could be characterized by variable dynamics, however, from the perspective of 20 years of transformation, it must be concluded that they contributed to upgrades in almost every sphere of the economic life.

Taking into consideration the research carried out in Poland concerning metropolitan areas, the first attempt of their delimitation was done by the National Statistic Office in 1968. The research was repeated on the basis of data received from NS in 1970 (Gontarski, 1973). Consecutively, under the supervision of the same author, a KPZK PAN Bulletin entitled “Obszary metropolitalne w Polsce” was published in 1980, where 21 metropolitan areas were delimited taking into consideration various criteria. However, it has to be kept in mind that in the seventies and the eighties of the twentieth century, in view of the socialist, not the free market economic system in force at that time, proper mechanisms of shaping of metropolitan functions were not created. In reality, they were not present in any Polish city whatsoever. In fact, the metropolitan areas distinguished at that time reflected the boundaries of metropolitan areas, therefore they constituted urban agglomerations.

Korcelli (2008), analyzing directions of transformation of urban settlement in Poland, notices that the period of transformation of the nineties did not bring about any significant changes in the assignment of settlement units, and the size of cities remained virtually unchanged. The following are considered significant changes:

- first of all – transformation in the functional structure of cities, including de-industrialization and a decrease of the exogenic sector in general employment, with concentration of these functions in given centers,
- second of all – the process of metropolization and society understood as concentration of “investment and modern economic activity in large cities and their functional areas, selective migration inflow to these centers and areas of human resources at the expense of outside-of-metropolis areas, including the peripheral regions of Poland” (p. 31). Essential is the lack of spatial and functional order in planning of sub-urban areas, which is specified as a vehement process of “impaired urbanization” (urban sprawl),
- third of all – reconstruction of the system of economic and social interrelations in the national settlement system. After the phase of disintegration of the nineties, a significant intensification of interrelations “in new ownership-related and spatial structures, related to the development of national entrepreneurship, as well as rooting of foreign investment” (p. 43).

These prerequisites have direct impact on shaping of the Polish metropolitan areas, development of metropolitan functions, and, as a consequence, metropolitan processes.

5. Metropolization in Polish literature of the subject

The issue of metropolization in Poland can be included in a relatively “new” research problems, since this process started to shape relatively recently, namely towards the end of the nineties in the capital, and after the year of 2000 – in the biggest Polish cities. These dates, determined in a discretionary manner, refer to the first publications raising this issue in the literature of the subject. In reality, the processes of metropolization still manifest themselves relatively weakly in Polish cities.

The issue of metropolization and metropolitan functions initially became a subject of research in centers in Warsaw. The precursor in the theoretical field was Korcelli (IGiPZ PAN) who, as early as in the seventies, highlighted the concepts of functional urban regions (1973, 1974, 1976). Currently, they are associated with metropolization processes.

However, it was not sooner than towards the end of the nineties than the first elaborations referring to the factually shaping metropolitan functions, and concerning the initial metropolization processes, occurred (Gawryszewski *et al.*, 1998, Grochowski, 2005, Smętkowski, 2003, Śleszyński, 2003a, 2007, 2009, 2011). Warsaw – as the biggest and most important city in Poland, experienced internationalization of institutions and high-level services first. It was related, *inter alia*, with the development of functions of the capital city, consecutively the metropolitan ones, concentration of international companies, managerial staff, and finally diplomatic in-

stitutions. The following studies brought up the process of internalization of Polish cities (Domański, 2001, Ilnicki 2003), globalization of Polish space (Kukliński *et al.* 2000), as well as integrated development of Polish socio-economic space (Kudłacz, Markowski, 2002).

An essential contribution to development of this issue was done by Jałowiecki who holistically highlighted in his studies the issue of metropolization, definitions, types and classification of metropolises (1999), shaping of metropolitan society, metropolitan space, and finally metropolization in Poland (2000, 2002, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2009).

Globalization and burgeoning metropolization processes in our country caused this issue to become in the last decade the subject of interest for many researchers. It also provokes many discussions and terminological controversies. Metropolization was becoming imminently visible and “identifiable”, which resulted in the creation of many studies undertaking a broad scope of topics. As a result of lack of research methodology and recognition of such complex settlement structures, as well as application of notions, indicators, delimitation criteria, in the initial phase of formation of this research problem, conferences were organized, aiming at exchanging experiences of researchers from the entire country. Particularly, two of them had an important contribution to recognition and highlighting the basic terminology related to metropolises and accompanying processes. The first conference was a periodical meeting – “Konwersatorium Wiedzy o Mieście”, in 2002 in Łódź, as a consequence of which a volume entitled “Funkcje metropolitalne i ich rola w organizacji przestrzeni” edited by Jażdżewska was written. The second meeting was a seminar in Łódź, summarizing arrangements related to determining the basic notions, definitions concerning metropolization and metropolitan functions. Identification of the key problems and conclusions, as well as conceptualization of the main notions, was published in 2006 in a synthetic study of Markowski and Marszał entitled: “Metropolie. Obszary metropolitalne. Metropolizacja. Problemy i pojęcia podstawowe”, published by Komitet Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania Kraju PAN.

An essential contribution in popularization of the problems of metropolization was also made by EUROREG (The Center of European Regional and Local Studies) with domicile in Warsaw, the specialists of which contributed greatly to the development of the issue of metropolization in Poland. Particularly broad research scope is presented by the aforementioned elaborations of Jałowiecki, but also Smętkowski (2003, 2007, 2008), which jointly constitute over 40 publications (www.euroreg.uw.edu.pl/pl/publikacje). Other researchers of the team contributed to popularization of this issue.

It must be highlighted that an essential contribution in relation to popularization of the issues of urban agglomerations and the related concepts, as well as metropolization itself, was also made by other city researchers, including socio-economic geographers. Particularly important is their contribution to concept works over the National Spatial Concept until 2030. Edited by Śleszyński and Korcelli (from Instytut Geografii i Przestrzennego Zagospodarowania Polskiej Akademii Nauk w Warszawie), the majority of maps included in this document were made

for the Ministry of Regional Development, as well as many experts' opinions of a substantive-methodological character.

Each of the researchers makes his own contribution to recognition of this very up-to-date, however of a very complex character, process of metropolization that is taking place before our eyes.

Analyzing the scientific output of the Polish researchers concerning metropolization according to the three criteria: spatial, functional and network, it might be concluded that the greatest output in this matter can be spotted in the first and second thematic scope. The least publications are concerned with the aspect of network metropolization. It is also noted that each metropolitan area in Poland has publications concerning some aspect of metropolization, delimitation of metropolitan area, functions, management, etc. The most advanced academic centers in terms of metropolitan research are: Warsaw, Kraków, Łódź, which is a result of research specialization and academic staff who for many years have been dealing with the issue of cities, including major urban systems (agglomerations), and their management. In the Warsaw center, they are, among others, Korcelli, Węciałowicz, Śleszyński (IGiPZ PAN), Jałowiecki, Gorzelak, Smętkowski (EUROREG), Grochowski, Lisowski (the University of Warsaw). On the other hand, in the Łódź center (the University of Łódź) it is: Liszewski, Markowski and Marszał together with a group of researchers (Bartosiewicz, Pielesiak, 2011, Danielewicz, 2013), as well as their research teams, whereas in the Kraków center (Jagiellonian University, Pedagogical University): Zborowski (2004, 2005, 2010), Domański *et al.* (2010), Raźniak (2007, 2012), Winiarczyk-Raźniak and Raźniak (2012), Raźniak and Winiarczyk-Raźniak (2013). An important contribution to the research issue was done by Szymańska with team (Szymańska *et al.* 2013) from the center in Toruń, as well as the geographers from the center in Poznań – Parysek (2003) and Kaczmarek and Mięka (2007, 2010). Metropolization was researched in Katowice (University of Economics) and Sosnowiec (University of Silesia) by Klasik and Kuźnik with team (2004, 2005, 2008, 2009, 2013, 2014), Szajnowska-Wysocka (2011, 2013a), Zuzańska-Żyśko (2011, 2012, 2014), Petryszyn (2008, 2011), Dolnicki, (2014).

Literature of the subject embraces, among the others, the following research scopes:

1) Spatial metropolization:

- metropolitan areas, their delimitation, selected metropolitan areas,
- relations between metropolis and region in information industry, suburban interrelations, suburbanization,
- social aspects, including migration in metropolitan areas,
- small towns in metropolitan areas,
- European metropolises and their regions, other metropolises, metropolitan integration,

2) Functional metropolization:

- definitions of metropolis, metropolitan functions, functional interrelations,
- polycentricism of metropolitan regions,
- daily urban system, functions urban region, urban region and metropolitan region,

- creative sector in metropolitan regions, regions based on knowledge,
 - touristic region, metropolitan tourism,
 - information economy of metropolis and competitiveness,
 - foreign capital, economy,
 - management and planning in metropolitan areas, the issue of metropolitan district, institutional level,
- 3) Network metropolization:
- network metropolization, metropolization and globalization, transportation systems.

6. Legal state of the metropolitan areas in Poland

In Polish legislation, the issue of metropolization is a relatively recent matter. The concept of metropolis and metropolitan areas is mentioned in the act on planning and spatial planning of 2003 (*Ustawa...*, 2003). It imposes an obligation to determine metropolitan areas in Poland. The issue of the number of metropolises, as well as their range has been raising a discussion on the level of local governments. It results from the fact of a lack of legal regulations in terms of defining metropolitan area, management and financing this structure, as well as scope of its competences. Many urban municipalities have attempted to be called metropolises, without any substantive justification, have determined metropolitan areas according to various criteria. Almost every major city wanted to be a metropolis, being able to notice advantages for the socio-economic development of the region.

The issue is more broadly highlighted in the National Spatial Development Plan 2030 (KPZK), (Fig. 1), imposing on the cities of sufficient development a necessity to determine metropolitan areas. According to the plan, there are the following metropolitan areas: Warszawa, Aglomeracja Górnośląska (the centre being Katowice), Kraków, Łódź, Trójmiasto, Poznań, Wrocław, a bipolar centre of Bydgoszcz and Toruń, as well as Szczecin and Lublin (Fig. 2). The aforementioned cities play the biggest role in the country's development processes. Because of the necessity to increase coordination and effectiveness of public actions, there ought to be special planning and spatial solutions. These cities, as metropolitan centres, also undertake to determine their urban functional areas.

The aforementioned position required further legal solutions. In 2013, a private member's bill was initiated, originally concerning metropolitan district. It concerned introduction of a new form of administration on the level of local governments through regulating the institution of metropolitan district. Finally, works on this bill changed and it took the name of an act on metropolitan partnerships (*Ustawa o związkach...*, 2015), which were in fact in the light of new regulations "association of territorial government authorities in a given metropolitan area" (*Ustawa o związkach...*, 2015). The act is a summary of a discussion on the topic of metropolitan areas in Poland.

Undoubtedly, it puts in order the issue of metropolization, however it does not solve all of the problems associated with the modern process of metropolization.

From one point of view, it is a necessary instrument reinforcing development and competitiveness of regions, on the other – it does not include all of the problems, e.g. of complex, multi-centre settlement systems, such as the Silesia Metropolitan Area, or the Gdańsk–Gdynia–Sopot Metropolitan Area. Some say that it is not consistent with the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, others accuse it of many flaws, just as the method of financing.

This act puts in order creation of the metropolitan association, determines its scope of action, as well as tasks, the issue of ownership and proprietary laws. It also regulates the problem of authorities of the metropolitan associations, financing and income. The following are included in tasks of a metropolitan association:

- shaping of spatial order,
- development of the area of the association, therefore the metropolitan area,
- public transport,
- cooperation in terms of state and national roads,
- promotion of the metropolitan area.



Fig. 1. Metropolitan centres in Poland according to KPZK 2030

Source: own elaboration.

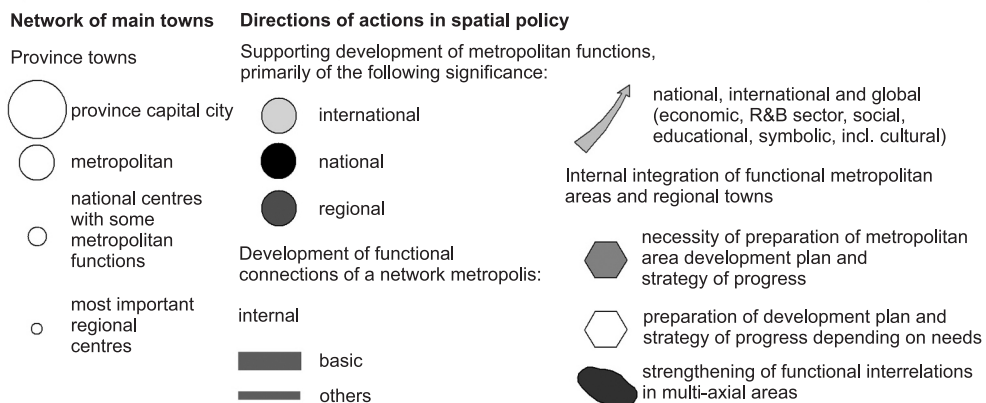
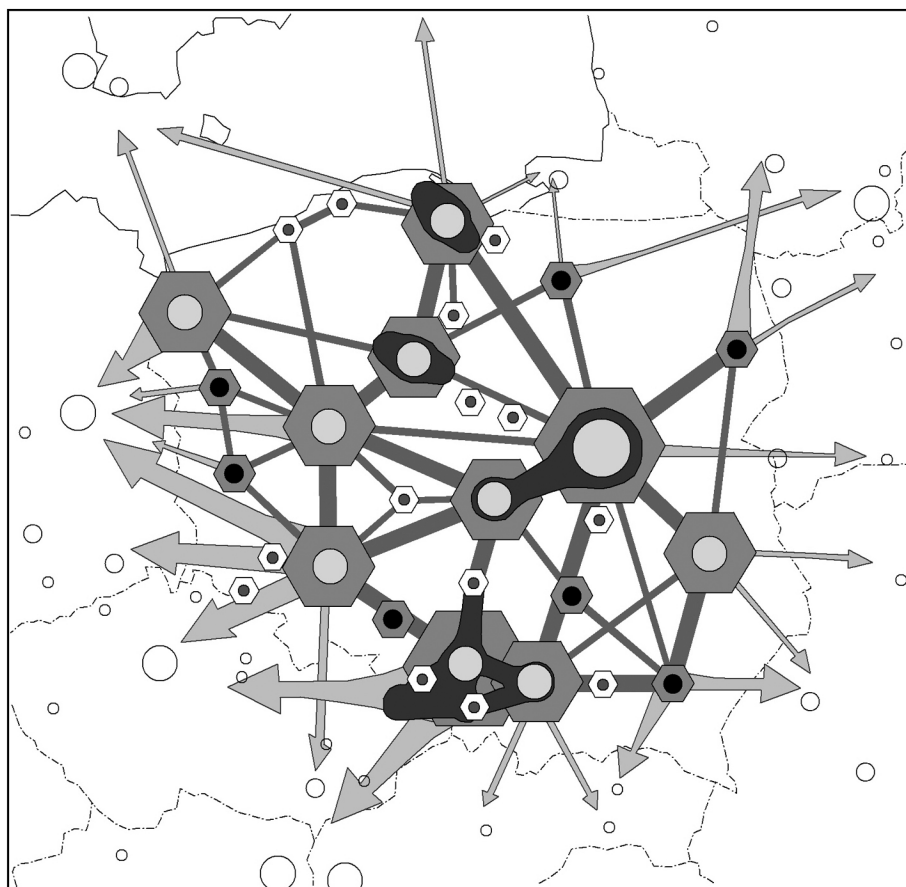


Fig. 2. Directions of actions of the spatial policy in terms of main urban centres in Poland source: KPZK 2030 (revised)

In practice, it equals to joint policy, metropolitan ticket or management of socio-economic development. The act anticipates that on the basis of agreements, an association can also realize other public-purpose tasks, however does not have to. It is an essential change in comparison with the previously suggested project of the act on metropolitan district. It ought not be surprising that a union of communities have both followers and opponents. In practice, it turns out if the idea of the metropolitan association is a better solution than the idea of the metropolitan district. Experiences of the Upper-Silesian Metropolitan Association (GZM) as a union of communities show that despite a laudable idea, and initially positive scope of cooperation, the association, from the perspective of time did not meet the anticipated assumptions, yet was an essential step towards development of the metropolitan structures in the state of Silesia.

It is therefore worth highlighting that in order to facilitate management of such complex settlement systems as metropolitan areas, a new formula is necessary – an organizational-legal statement. Forms of voluntary cooperation ought to be replaced *Formy współdziałania jednostek samorządu terytorialnego* with appointing general-metropolitan bodies. Will the metropolitan associations, as associations of territorial government units in Poland, fulfil the metropolitan tasks and challenges of a new economy based on knowledge? The future will show.

7. Summary

The issue of metropolization is a very important and multidimensional research problem. The presented literature on the subject shows, that the investigation on cities and complex settlement structures in Poland gives the view about their development, research methods and current state of advancement of metropolization processes. It presents a different look at urbanisation processes, urban settlement systems and functional-spatial research. It allows the proper understanding of settlement processes, including metropolization ones. The development of new spatial structures in Poland, which make the next stage of settlement system development, induces to reflections on functional-spatial forms, metropolitan area or metropolitan region.

The development of metropolization process in Poland is conditioned by many factors, both internal and external. The last-mentioned played the key role in the development of international economic and institutional connections of Polish cities. They are as follows: foreign investments, globalization of economy, including the trade, entering of Poland into the European Union and revitalization of old urban spaces financed from UE funds, wide and free access to internet and other modern forms of teleinformation.

On the base of literature it is stated that metropolization in Poland is relatively new research issue, which enjoys more and more interest of different research circles. Each of them contributes into the formation of theoretical bases and research methods. The literature on this subject indicates larger interest in spatial and functional aspects of metropolization. Elaborations concerning net and global flows are

met to a smaller degree, what results from the lack of available databases for Polish cities.

Records in government documents – in the National Spatial Development Plan 2030 concerning metropolitan areas and functional urban areas and in a new act on metropolitan partnerships allow to suppose that the issue of metropolization will be one of main questions of city development in the next decade. These documents point at the directions of activity and development of metropolization in Poland.

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