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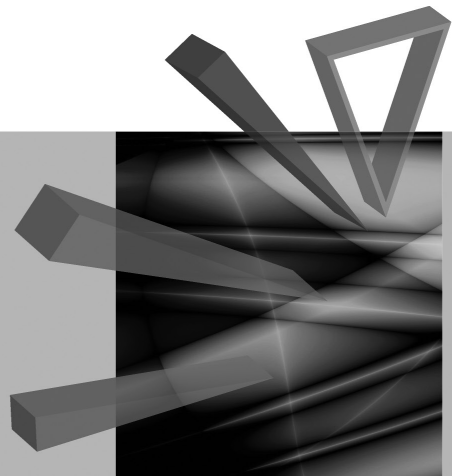
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METROPOLIZATION OF THE POLISH SPACE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to discuss selected changes taking place in the Polish socio-economic space due to the process of its metropolization. Additionally the author tries to determine their impact on the development of the country at the regional level in subsequent years. Despite different difficulties, the metropolization of the Polish socio-economic space advances. To benefit from the development of this process as a country, one must ensure the existence of a development model of polarization and diffusion – recommended by the European Commission in the 2014–2020 programming perspective. The positive impact of metropolization should make easier the flow of information, innovation, capital and diffusion of knowledge which should help to initiate or enhance the endogenous assets of individual spatial units, also those located outside metropolitan areas.

Keywords: metropolization, socio-economic space, regional development.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this article is to discuss selected changes taking place in the Polish socio-economic space in the process of its metropolization and to determine their impact on the development of the country at the regional level in subsequent years. Particular attention is focused on the following components: employment, movement of people from suburbs to metropolises, lifelong education and economy innovativeness.

Metropolization processes and urbanization are inextricably linked with the concept of the city. Spatial units are classified as cities not only on the basis of the administrative criterion, but also with regard to a variety of additional ones, such as (e.g. [Czornik 2008, p. 15]):

- 1) the characteristics of local population, ways of spending time (so-called urban lifestyle),
- 2) the concentration of economic activity,

- 3) the prevalence of non-agricultural activity,
- 4) the density of population,
- 5) the density of housing,
- 6) professional, cultural, economic and social diversity of the population,
- 7) the degree of anonymity (the dominance of instrumental relations over personal ones),
- 8) the intensity of the use of space (e.g. the dominance of multi-storey buildings),
- 9) the amount of ground rent.

Among these, the criteria related to urban life style and density of housing currently play the most important role.

It is the cities that play the leading role in the development of individual regions and countries. This characterizes highly developed economies, the developing ones but also many of those economies that are lagging behind in terms of their development. Cities are spatial units where many phenomena and processes are concentrated and therefore they may affect the development and their surrounding environment both positively and negatively. On the one hand, they are considered to be the formation centres of industry, services, science, culture, political decisions, etc. On the other hand, they are affected by such problems as social inequality, crime, social pathologies, congestion, pollution, etc. (e.g. [Gorzalak 2008, p. 91]).

2. Cities worldwide and the metropolization of space

Figure 1 presents the distribution of urban population in the world. On analysing the data one can draw the conclusion that, apart from some exceptions, the higher rate of urbanization appears in the more developed countries and regions of the world. It reaches the highest value in the North, South and Central America, Europe (especially the Scandinavian countries) and Australia.

The analysis of space metropolization indicates that among cities special attention should be paid to global cities, gigacities, megacities and megalopolises. Global cities are centres of decision-making on a global level in many fields, including economics and politics. Gigacities are referred to as the largest conurbations in the world (they include Tokyo, Mexico City, New York, São Paulo and Bombay). Megacities are urban clusters with population of 10 million or more. Megalopolises go beyond the boundaries of cities and each of them can include one or more metropolitan areas [Korenik (Ed.) 2010, p. 117].

Cities, as well as people living in them and different types of activities conducted in them, are the point of interest of many fields of science. Apart from economics, they include sociology, geography, law, administration, philosophy, psychology, political science and history. This is due to the fact that urbanization, which results from the increase of the population of cities and the spread of urban

lifestyle in the country [Korenik (Ed.) 2010, p. 108], is understood not only as an economic process but also as a social and political one, which results in a wide variety of consequences.

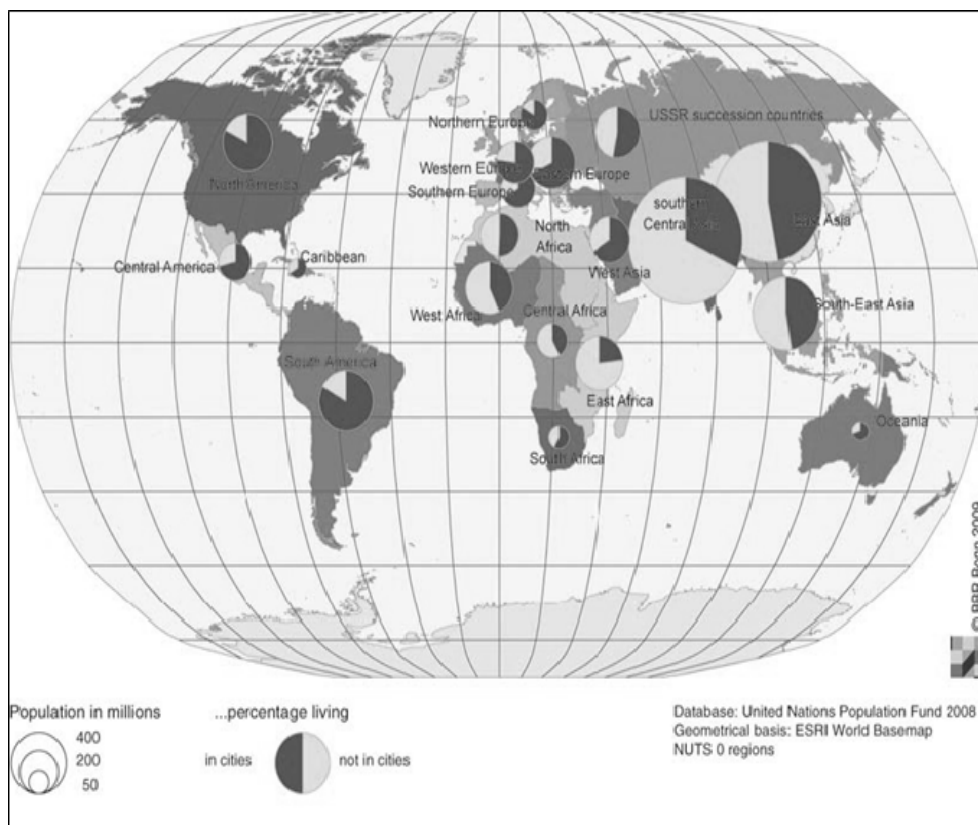


Figure 1. Percentage of world population living in cities

Source: Database United Nations Population Fund 2008, cited after [Federal Institute... 2011, p. 13].

Metropolization is the highest stage of urbanization. This stage is only achieved by very few cities. The concept of metropolization, similarly as a metropolitan area, concerns the development of a function, or functional categories, rather than morphological ones. Metropolization causes significant changes in the settlement network relations. Its features include [Markowski, Marszał 2006, p. 19]:

- the creation of new geographic and qualitative relations between spatial units on a global scale,
- peripherization of certain areas, especially of a non-urban nature, in result of deepening and broadening cooperation within the network of metropolitan cities,

- exchange and the development of new actors in the international space in the economic, social, scientific, cultural or political dimension.

As has been mentioned, the metropolization and the impact of metropolis may be perceived through the hierarchical system, beginning with the regional impact through national, international (including continental), finishing with global metropolization.

Metropolization is a fundamental process linking given territory with the globalization of the economy [Jewtuchowicz 2004, p. 51]. It speeds up the globalization of the world economy but, as has been noted, it is selective (discontinuous in terms of space) [Jałowicki 2002, p. 33]. The differences between the effects of metropolization, as compared with the effects of the earlier phases of urbanization, include altered relations between the metropolis (metropolitan area) and the region; changes in the division of labour, capital, knowledge, and authority in space; an increase in the value and impact of large urban systems; and weak links between the intensity of the impact of the metropolis and the geographical distance [Markowski, Marszał 2006, p. 10].

The development of the metropolis depends not only on its administrative, economic, cultural and political functions performed in its surroundings but also on the number and quality of connections in the technical infrastructure (inside as well as within its surroundings). This applies to the transport infrastructure, communications (effective public Internet connections), energy, water supply and sewerage, environmental protection (e.g. sewage treatment plants), etc. Additionally, metropolises are centres characterized by a relatively high research potential and achievements on an international scale at least in the field of science.

3. Metropolization of the Polish space

Metropolitan functions may be considered in terms of activity in the following areas ([Stoll 1999, pp. 251–261], cited after: [Kuznik 2004, pp. 61, 62]):

- a) science and education,
- b) art, media, communication and publishing,
- c) wholesale,
- d) credit institutions and insurance,
- e) legal, economic and technological consulting.

One may append it with politics and administration, tourism, recreation and entertainment, communications and telecommunications [Klasik 2001, p. 16].

Among Polish cities aspiring to the status of a metropolis at least at an international range one should enumerate (in alphabetical order): Gdańsk (or Tri-City), Katowice (or Silesian Agglomeration), Kraków, Poznań, Warsaw and Wrocław. Sometimes also Łódź and Szczecin are added [Markowski, Marszał 2006, pp. 11–14]. On assigning cities to this group it is important to consider quantitative criteria to a

lesser extent (for example the criterion concerning the population) and focus more on the qualitative characteristics (such as the role of the centre in economy, science, culture, etc.).

Additionally, the metropolitan functions may be regarded in terms of the share of the population (from other territorial units and especially neighbouring) which is employed in the big cities. In recent years all of the big cities in Poland attracted the population from the neighbouring areas, as shown in Figure 2. Nevertheless, not all of them may be considered a metropolis.

Warsaw had the widest range of influence in this regard, which is largely the manifestation of its metropolitan functions not only economic in nature but also political, financial, scientific, cultural, etc. The most of other cities listed above (Kraków, Poznań, Łódź, Tri-City and Wrocław) did not stand out in this regard against all major Polish cities. Two others (Silesian Agglomeration and Szczecin) had in this field weaker impact on the environment than other large cities in Poland.

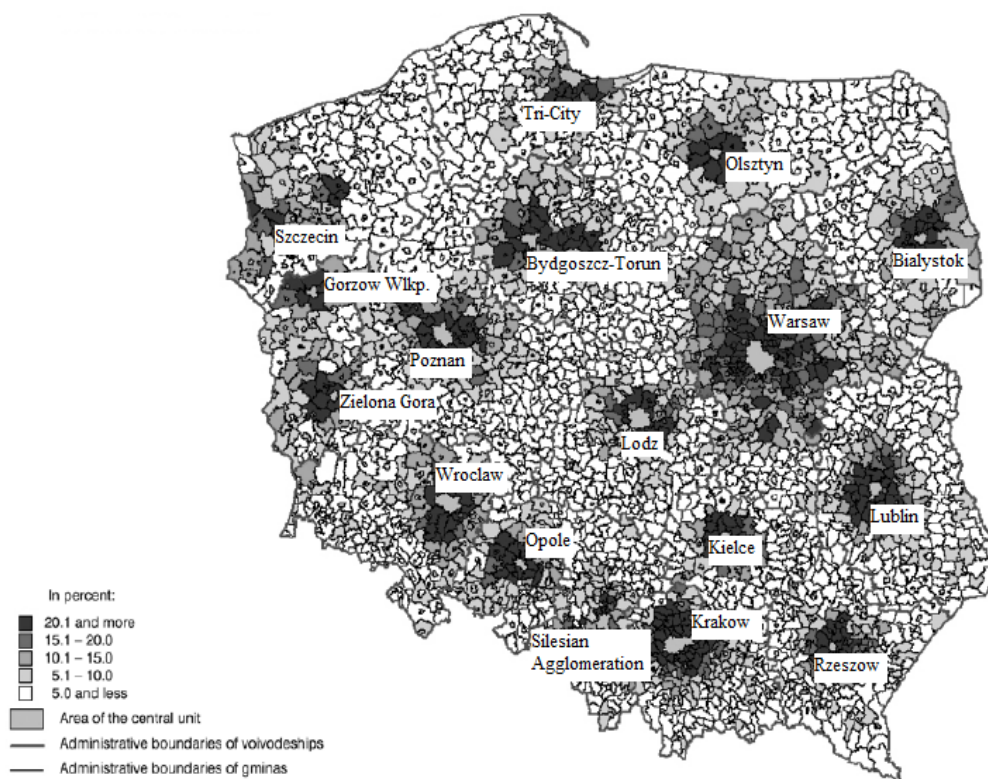


Figure 2. Persons moving to big cities to work in Poland as a percentage of the total number of the employed in communes in 2006

Source: data of Urban Statistics Centre in Poznań, after: [Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010, p. 26].

The metropolization of Polish cities and suburban areas is changing the functional structure: the centre is dominated by services and the industry is being transferred to the suburbs, where large commercial facilities are located. High standard apartments and shopping malls are placed downtown. Inside the metropolis and in its relations with the surrounding areas, there occurs a polarization of development. This polarization takes place on many levels of which the socio-economic one is particularly important. Problematic urban areas with negative socio-economic phenomena related to: unemployment, emigration and liquidation of companies, etc. were also present in the cities mentioned above as metropolises, especially the Silesian Agglomeration, Poznań and Szczecin (see more in: [Dziemianowicz, Łukomska 2009]).

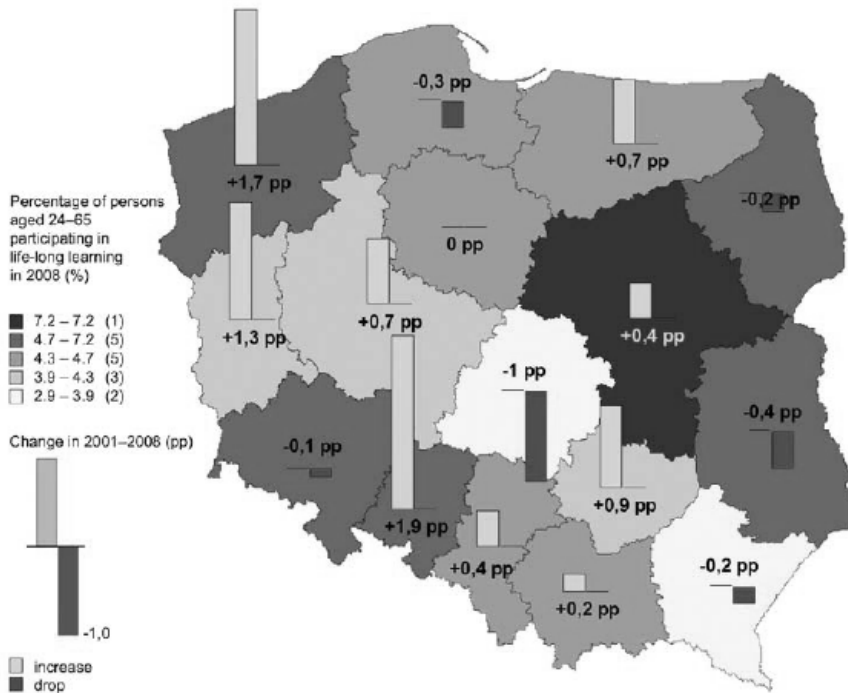


Figure 3. Percentage of persons between 24 and 65 who participate in lifelong learning by voivodships in 2008

Source: [Ministerstwo Rozwoju Regionalnego 2010, p. 44].

It can also be noticed that in some of the regions with metropolises as centres there was a relatively high proportion of people aged 24–65 participating in lifelong learning. In the Mazowieckie Voivodship it was over 7% in 2008 (while in the years 2001–2008 an increase in participation by 0.4 percentage points was recorded).

This high proportion was also present in the Dolnośląskie, Opolskie, Lubelskie, Podlaskie and Zachodniopomorskie Voivodships. In the studied period the increase was also recorded in the Lubuskie, Opolskie, Małopolskie, Śląskie, Świętokrzyskie, Wielkopolskie and Zachodniopomorskie Voivodships. The relevant data is shown in Figure 3.

Innovative phenomena in Poland, as in most countries, were most frequent mainly in big cities and metropolitan areas. Table 1 presents selected data showing the level of innovation by voivodeship. The largest expenditures were in those voivodeships where there were metropolises: Mazowieckie, Śląskie, Wielkopolskie and Dolnośląskie Voivodships; these expenditures were associated with metropolises. The same applied to granted patents, leaders were voivodships: Mazowieckie, Śląskie, Małopolskie and Dolnośląskie.

Table 1. Selected data on innovativeness in Polish voivodships

Voivodship	Expenditures on innovation activity for product and process innovations in industry in mln zł (current prices) – data concern economic entities employing more than 49 persons		Patents granted – resident; filled at the Patent Office of Republic of Poland (data of the Patent Office of the Republic of Poland)		
	2005	2010	2000	2005	2010
Total	14 329.1	22 379.0	939	1 054	1 385
Dolnośląskie	1 138.6	1 673.3	90	90	146
Kujawsko-pomorskie	784.2	1 012.9	34	39	35
Lubelskie	493.9	491.0	31	47	55
Lubuskie	121.2	210.3	10	10	7
Łódzkie	350.9	#	49	87	94
Małopolskie	866.3	1 007.6	99	86	164
Mazowieckie	3 533.9	6 031.2	239	285	326
Opolskie	275.0	240.6	10	24	28
Podkarpackie	671.0	871.4	35	35	32
Podlaskie	304.1	#	6	13	11
Pomorskie	784.4	1 609.9	45	30	81
Śląskie	2 497.7	3 871.8	179	186	233
Świętokrzyskie	422.5	279.1	13	12	25
Warmińsko-mazurskie	257.8	219.8	8	13	18
Wielkopolskie	1 455.9	1 383.8	56	65	95
Zachodniopomorskie	371.7	482.1	35	32	35

– data may not be published due to the necessity of maintaining statistical confidentiality in accordance with the Law on Public Statistics.

Source: own study, based on [Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2011, pp. 54, 55].

Compared to other regions, Mazowieckie definitely stood out: apart from occupying the leader position, it reported a significant increase in product and

process investment in the industry in 2010 as compared to 2005. Also in terms of granted patents there has been an increase in contrast to 2000 and 2005.

4. Conclusions

The problems that hinder the development of metropolization in Poland concern especially communication links, potential and scientific achievements, and the level of innovation. Other important issues are improper development and degradation of space in cities, as well as the pace of the process of revitalization of neglected and unused areas. One should also mention here the polarization of the development in the metropolises and the persistence of poverty and social pathologies, as well as the relatively weak influence on the development of the surrounding areas. Another facet of the problem is the relatively weak integration in cooperation with international and global metropolises in developed economies [Jałowiecki 2007, p. 103].

Despite these difficulties, the metropolization of the Polish socio-economic space advances. One of the contributors to this is the communication with foreign metropolises and the trends in the movement of capital and people. For Poland, to benefit from the development of this process as a country, one must ensure the existence of a development model of polarization and diffusion. This model is recommended by the European Commission in the 2014–2020 programming perspective. The positive impact of metropolization should facilitate the flow of information, innovation, capital and diffusion of knowledge. These impulses should help to initiate or enhance the endogenous assets of individual spatial units located outside metropolitan areas, in accordance with the concept of neo-endogeneous development. It is due to the development of specific territorial advantages in these areas that attractive conditions for investors (also foreign) and community may be successfully created.

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METROPOLIZACJA POLSKIEJ PRZESTRZENI I JEJ SKUTKI DLA ROZWOJU REGIONÓW

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest omówienie wybranych zmian mających miejsce w polskiej przestrzeni społeczno-ekonomicznej, zachodzących w wyniku postępującego procesu jej metropolizacji. Autorka podjęła także próbę określenia wpływu tego procesu na rozwój kraju w przekroju regionalnym w następnych latach. Pomimo różnych utrudnień, metropolizacja polskiej przestrzeni społeczno-ekonomicznej postępuje. Aby Polska jako kraj zyskiwała na rozwoju tego procesu, należy zadbać o zaistnienie modelu zalecanego przez Komisję Europejską w perspektywie programowania 2014-2020, mianowicie modelu rozwoju typu polaryzacyjno-dyfuzyjnego. Pozytywne oddziaływanie metropolizacji powinno dotyczyć ułatwień w przepływie informacji, innowacji, kapitału oraz dyfuzji wiedzy. Z kolei te impulsy powinny pomóc zainicjować lub wzmacniać endogeniczne atuty poszczególnych jednostek przestrzennych, także tych zlokalizowanych poza obszarami metropolitalnymi.

Słowa kluczowe: metropolizacja, przestrzeń społeczno-ekonomiczna, rozwój regionalny.