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Concepts of the metropolis as a form of the city and region: inspirations for sociology

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Abstract

Polish urban sociology cannot be released from its nineteenth-century legacy as an infant of rural sociology that ignores intellectual and institutional relationships with social and urban geography. A minor interest of Polish sociology in regional sociology involves even more marginal interest in the metropolisation processes, which interrelate urban and regional studies and invalidate the division in urban and rural issues. The interdisciplinary exchange of ideas about the city as a social phenomenon is unsatisfactory while urban and regional studies are still more an appeal than reality. An adaptation of the basic concepts of New Urban Sociology can be seen as one chance to overcome the marginalisation. The aim of this paper is to revisit classical concepts and literature that is poorly known by Polish sociologists who tend to either discover what has already been discovered outside sociology or build their conceptual dependence on the 'world' literature rather than adapt it to the domestic cultural milieu.

The nature of the metropolis is discussed in the paper and the role of metropolitan functions rather than urban size is stressed. The question of metropolises in Poland is touched upon and the limited number of the metropolises pointed to. Metropolitan ambitions of middle-sized towns are noted. Politisation of the metropolitan issue is pointed to in this context. It is argued that the concept of metropolitan area has yet to be emancipated from that of metropolis.

Forms of the macro-urban settlement, poorly known in sociology, are discussed. This includes the concepts of: the city, urbanised area, conurbation, urban aggregation, urban agglomeration, metropolitan area, urban complex, metropolis, megalopolis, daily urban system, (functional) urban region, urban field, and metropolitan region.

Methods and criteria of delimitation are summed up. A method is lacking that would allow for a reliable delimitation of urban agglomerations on the national scale according to uniform criteria.

The question of standardisation of terminology is discussed, which was normative oriented. These tendencies resulted not only from the attempt to get precise terminology but also from a methodological monism that assumed that only one correct set of relations between names and

concepts should exist. The efforts to standardise terminology showed thus symptoms of nominalism because a generally accepted term was sought for the form of the macro-urban settlement while the fact was ignored that such an action could hardly reduce the number of related concepts, so even standardised terms must have left many different meanings. The terminological standardisation would thus have resulted in misconception.

Models of the management of metropolises are discussed. Metropolitan poviats are opted for Poland as a basic model of the management of anachronic county boroughs. It is argued that these boroughs be abolished. The territorial system should be unified legally but diverse territorially, a principle that with difficulty appeals to politicians and sociologists. Associations of communes or poviats should be a sufficient tool for coordinating the development of metropolitan areas.

The question of the possible Rzeszów metropolis is discussed. In the political debate, the notion of the metropolis is confused with that of metropolitan area, and actual metropolitan features with their statistical or administrative appearances. The amalgamation of the Rzeszów county borough with the respective poviat must be the first formal-administrative step towards the metropolitan status. This would be, however, politically risky because it would result in an amalgamation of centre-leftist town with its right-wing surroundings. The territorial expansion of the Rzeszów metropolitan area would thus have to involve a deepening of the conservatism of the potential metropolis, i.e. its de facto de-metropolisation. Metropolis, even if institutionalised, is basically a social phenomenon, based on functions performed rather than political nomination. If therefore middle-sized towns wish to develop these functions they require reasonable strategies of development to achieve thier goal.

Fascinated by its courage of being released from its traditional urban legacy, Polish would-be metropolitan sociology appears to choke the new concepts of American sociology that need not be adaptable to the domestic conditions. The quest for new concepts seems highly important if old ones are no longer adequate. Any attempts to transgress the traditional sociological parochialism would be welcome, but new metropolitan sociology abstracted from the achievements of social geography hardly seems possible.

Key words: urban sociology, metropolis, city, region, Poland, Rzeszów

1. Metropolis and Polish sociology

Six main points may be concluded from the inspiring article by Katarzyna Kaj-danek (2009).

(1) Polish urban sociology cannot be released from its nineteenth-century legacy as a rather unexpected infant of rural sociology.

(2) Fascinated by its courage at being separated from rural sociology, Polish urban sociology is hardy able to note the anachronism of the division in urban and rural since it is strongly chained to the Chicago school of social ecology.

(3) A minor interest of Polish sociology in regional sociology involves even more marginal interest in the metropolisation processes, which interrelate urban and regional studies and invalidate the division in urban and rural issues.

(4) Paradoxically, the ecological legacy of urban sociology does not preclude the minor intellectual and, especially, institutional relationships of urban sociology with social and urban geography.

(5) A forum of an open exchange of ideas between urban sociologists is lacking and this results in desperate attempts of younger and innovative representatives of the discipline to present their ideas on various available forums, including those loosely related to sociology.

(6) The interdisciplinary exchange of ideas about the city as a social phenomenon is unsatisfactory while urban and regional studies are still more an appeal than reality.

An adaptation of the basic concepts of New Urban Sociology and the related Socio-Spatial Perspective can be seen as one chance to overcome this marginalisation. The main assumptions of the latter perspective include (Kajdanek 2009): the importance of the impact of the global forces on local milieus, the role of local authorities and real estate agencies (Majer 1997), and the perspective of metropolitan culture (Jałowiecki 2000), including the relation between social stratification and socio-spatial segregation. The reason is that the development of metropolitan collectivities is less and less determined by behaviour of the local actors while it is more and more strongly influenced by decisions made at the global level (Kajdanek 2009).

The aim of this paper is to revisit classical concepts and literature that is poorly known, if not ignored, by Polish sociologists who tend to either discover what has already been discovered outside sociology or build their conceptual dependence on the 'world', i.e. Anglo-Saxon, literature rather than adapt it to the domestic cultural milieu.

2. The nature of the metropolis

The metropolisation process can be recognised as a new phase of urbanisation, considered in terms of concentration and de-concentration on various spatial scales. The process is related to the development of the information economy, in which the relation between the city and its region is being reduced for those with global economy via relationships in the network of metropolises (Friedmann 1986; Batten 1995; Castells 1998; Sassen 2000). This is to say that local and regional hierarchical relationships are replaced by non-hierarchical global relationships. This process can be analysed in terms of the production of urban space and consists of changing the relationship between the central city and its umland, as well as of discontinuous mode of use of urbanised areas (Jałowiecki 1999). The discontinuity means the involvement of social and economic relations in global rather than local networks (*ibidem*).

It would be, however, hardly possible to discuss the metropolisation process when abstracting from the metropolis. The latter term means the home town ('mother town' in Greek). In Antiquity, it meant a Greek, and implicitly also the earlier Phoenician, city-state that founded colonies overseas. Two meanings resulted from the term in the modern ages. One referred to the imperialist state in relation to its colonial possessions overseas. In the other meaning, metropolis means a large or, more strictly, important city as a centre of political (national capital), economic or ideological power over the subordinated area. The function rather than size, understood in terms of population, was thus always the essence of the metropolis. The mediaeval Cracow, with its population of 5,000, was a European metropolis while the metropolitan status of the contemporary Łódź, sized 740,000, is considerably less obvious not only compared with the above case but also with the contemporary city of Luxemburg, sized 94,000.

Now the metropolis is a city that performs high order central-place functions, i.e. ones of at least national range. This especially applies to the functions of the fourth sector of the economy, i.e. management functions that should not be confused with administration. The metropolis is therefore a modern settlement unit, which is a headquarters of international companies and institutions, as well as national but having developed relationships with foreign countries; it is a centre of the mass

media and an important transport hub (Jałowiecki 2000) and, more strictly, a node in the network of relationships. Global metropolises polarise the metropolitan, i.e. central, space and peripheries (Jałowiecki 1999) by concentrating management functions of the global economy (Gorzelak, Smętkowski, 2005). The metropolis concentrates capital in all its forms: economic, financial, infrastructural, human, social, cultural, and political while dependent space extends beyond. Due to its dynamic, the metropolis is processual, and the communication of metropolises with each other produces the *tunnel effect*; information is transferred between the cities without stopping on the way, making cities grow even faster, aggravating the already formed contrast with the non-metropolitan hinterland (Jałowiecki 2001). The innovativeness of the economy is now, and probably always was, essential for the very concept of metropolis.

The city aspiring to become the metropolis should be a seat of subsidiaries of international corporations, diplomatic missions, banks, medial firms, and universities with a considerable proportion of international academics and students; it should have good transport and communication links with foreign countries via the networks of motorways, high speed railways, and air connections; the tertiary sector should dominate in employment structure, with a substantial share of modern telecommunication technologies; it should also be a centre of international cultural, scientific, and political events (Soldatos 1991).

From the socio-cultural point of view, metropolises are determinants of late modern, if not post-modern, culture. They concentrate many inhabitants and visitors with highly complex group affiliations and social statuses. Heterogeneity is thus a basic characteristic of the metropolis (Gruba 2012). The ideal of the pluralist cosmopolitan society is realised in metropolises. Informal social control is reduced to a historical minimum (Gruba 2012) at the expense of the extreme growth in the range of formal social control under the pretext of ensuring public safety (Wątroba 2009; Skórzyńska-Ślusarek 2012). This results in a loosening of social ties, as well as ephemerality and contingency of social contacts and encounters (Gruba 2012). The reduction of spatial distances is thus accompanied by a growth in social distances, with the appearances of their reduction, which result from a de-formalisation of their external manifestations. The existence of the metropolitan (Jałowiecki 2000) or

creative class (Florida 2010) is an important characteristic of the metropolis. This fact is related to the uniqueness and specificity of the metropolis as a place (Bassand 1997). This is to say that the metropolis is a city that performs important specialised functions.

3. Metropolises in Poland

Taking the above mentioned criteria as a departure point, only Warsaw can be undoubtedly recognised as a metropolitan centre in contemporary Poland. With the application of more liberal criteria, Cracow, Wrocław, Tricity (of Gdańsk, Sopot, and Gdynia) and Poznań should be added to this set. Katowice, on the contrary, would have much less chance of being included in the set, even though a consideration of the Upper Silesian Metropolitan Union of 14 county boroughs would increase the chances considerably. Łódź, isolated in terms of transport, being depopulated as a result of the process of the post-socialist de-industrialisation, and lacking supra-national functions, could not be included in the set. The metropolitan aspiration of Rzeszów, sized 181,000 and lacking any considerable international functions, could be assessed either in ambitious terms (Jałowiecki 2000) or in those of substantive incompetence, consisting of a misidentification of the metropolis with the region. The metropolitan aspirations of Zielona Góra (Łatwiński 2008), sized 119,000 and lacking any extra-regional functions, could be, in turn, recognised as odd.

It is necessary to add here that the recognition of the given settlement system as a metropolis is to be based on, as was already mentioned, performed functions rather than administrative decisions or political tenders. It is worth noting, however, that the Union of Polish Metropolises was founded in 1990 by mayors of five cities, i.e. Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań, Wrocław, and Gdańsk, the fact that seems to confirm the limited set of the Polish metropolitan centres. Seven subsequent cities were, however, included in the Union, i.e. Łódź, Szczecin, Bydgoszcz, Katowice, Lublin, Białystok, and Rzeszów, a fact that should be assessed as a confusion of metropolises and the main cities (Dziewoński 1980; Rykiel 1985b). The Union of Polish Metropolises is an associated member of the World Association of Large Metropolises *METROPOLIS*, in which Warsaw is the only Polish city included as an

ordinary member. Within the European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON), Functional Urban Areas (FUAs) were identified, which included Metropolitan European Growth Areas (MEGAs) of four categories. Warsaw, as the only Polish city again, was included in the group of the potential MEGA or the European metropolises of the third order while seven further cities, i.e. Cracow, Katowice (the conurbation), Tricity, Poznań, Wrocław, Łódź, and Szczecin were classified as weakly developed European metropolises of the fourth order or weak MEGA. The set of eight cities seems to include the maximal number of centres that might be recognised as Polish metropolises in functional sense.

It is worth noting here that (Markowski, Marszał, 2006)[1] the metropolis is a form of the city since it is the city rather than urban agglomeration, discussed beyond, that transforms in the metropolis. The reason is that the concept of the metropolis is, as was already mentioned, based on performed functions while the concept of urban agglomeration is based on spatial structure. What differentiates the metropolis, even though not necessarily metropolitan area, from a large city (with its agglomeration) is its international rank (or importance) of such a settlement system, i.e. its share in global economic processes.

A question arises whether or not the metropolitan centre has its own metropolitan area as its surrounding. This question is, however, purely formal because it depends on how wide the limits of the city are delineated. If they are delineated broadly, the metropolis may not have its metropolitan area since the immediate functional area is included in the city's limits.

If one assumes that the metropolis is a city that performs functions on at least a national scale, a hierarchy of metropolises – indicated above by the example of Poland – seems obvious. National, continental, and the three global metropolises combine the most obvious levels of the hierarchy. Regional metropolises have traditionally been identified in France, and now – as was indicated – also in Poland, although implicitly; this seems reasonable provided, however, that not every

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[1] The publication referred to here is a report based on a questionnaire *Metropolises and metropolitan areas in Poland* distributed to experts, including the present author. While opinions of individual experts were not cited, indicated or referred to in the report, the present author, wherever referring to this publication, refers to his own opinions.

regional centre is identified with a metropolis.

A quibble of the classification of metropolises in developed, developing, and potential – as was once the case of urban agglomerations – should be, however, warned against. The logical base of such a classification is far from clear while it may be assumed, also on the empirical base, that catching the metropolitan status would be a kind of nobilitation for smaller towns. A striving to meet the formal rather than essential criteria of the metropolis would be one result of this development, with – a certainly not groundless – hope, to political, if not financial, benefits. It is necessary to conclude in this context that the possible 'developing metropolises' are not yet metropolises in general while 'potential metropolises' can hardly be such in the expected future.

4. Metropolis vs metropolitan area

Metropolitan area is a cognitive and statistical category that has functioned in North American practice for over half a century now while it occupies somewhat less time in West European and Polish discourses. The notion of the metropolitan area is grounded in the statistics of most developed countries. It is applied to distinguish de facto, i.e. independent of the administrative and political criteria, urban from rural populations around large cities and middle-sized towns. Inhabitants of the metropolitan areas are classified as urban, i.e. unlike the Central Statistical Office traditionally does in Poland, followed by a predominant majority of Polish sociologists. Possible coordinating, planning, administrative and/or political functions are secondary to the statistical functions.

What is a metropolitan area in the United States is decided by the Bureau of Census; in Poland a temptation can be seen to delegate the decision to planners and politicians. A politisation of the metropolitan issue is one result of this tendency, and thus the lobbying of the local governments of middle-sized towns to achieve a metropolitan status, similar to their effort to 'hook for the plan' under communism, is inevitable.

The definition of the metropolitan area is rather old, accepted, and well described in the literature (see Korcelli 1967). A metropolitan area is one strongly

functionally related to a large town. Semantically, the term *metropolitan area* is admittedly derived from the term *metropolis*, in fact, however, the logical relation between the two notions relaxed quite a time ago simply because not every centre of a metropolitan area could be categorised as a metropolis. This results from the fact that the metropolis is identified, as was already mentioned, on the basis of the performed functions while the metropolitan area is delineated on the basis of the functional relationships of the centre with its umland.

The delimitation of the metropolitan area (Markowski, Marszał, 2006)[2] is therefore based on functional (vector) criteria, i.e. relationships, rather than structural (scalar) criteria. The criteria vary over time as they are related to technological progress. While the fact of the uneven development is accepted, it is necessary to conclude that if the criteria vary over time, they also do over space.

A delimitation for cognitive purposes, based on the present state, should not be, however, confused with that for planning purposes, based on the expected or postulated state. In the former, the basic administrative units are taken instrumentally, they are therefore useful only in so far as they are units of the aggregation of statistical data. In the latter delimitation, on the contrary, the administrative units are subsidiary, i.e. they are relevant only if it is expected the metropolitan area would be a management unit.

The development of metropolitan areas is a result of sub-urbanisation (the second phase of urbanisation), which should not be misidentified with re-urbanisation (the fourth phase). In Poland, like in all post-communist countries, it is hardly possible to talk about re-urbanisation since there was no, and probably can not be, de-urbanisation (the third phase of the process).

According to the bill of 2003, the metropolitan area is one of a large city and the immediate umland functionally related to it, defined in the concept of the spatial organisation of the country; it is therefore the planner's responsibility to determine the identification of the metropolitan status of individual settlement units. In its version of 2011, twelve metropolitan areas were identified; their set refers to the membership in the Union of Polish Metropolises. Interestingly, however, one unit

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[2] Footnote 1 applies to three successive paragraphs.

was named the 'metropolitan area of the Upper Silesian conurbation', whatever the metropolitan area of a conurbation could mean, while another unit was identified as the 'metropolitan area of Bydgoszcz and Toruń', disregarding the fact that the two towns are physically separated by 40 km of forest and perform few metropolitan functions, and there is no reason to relate the notion of metropolis, or even the core of a metropolitan area, with a bi- or multi-centred entity (Rykiel, Kowalewski, 2004).

5. Metropolis as a form of the macro-urban settlement

In recent years in Poland the issues of metropolises and, to a lesser extent, of metropolitan areas is a subject of extensive discussion, more political and journalistic than scientific. On scientific grounds, the issues are included in the context of macro-urban forms of settlement, whose scale goes beyond local, approaching regional. In this very context the notion of the metropolis is understood as such a form of macro-urban settlement that can hardly be referred to as a city, for it rather represents a form of a highly urbanised sub-region. Under the globalisation processes and increased competition of territorial units, patterns of urbanisation are changing. New socio-spatial phenomena underlie a substitution of the traditional, socially accepted and internalised, settlement structures by new – and these result in an exploration of new notions for qualitatively new phenomena. The development trajectories of large urban centres result now in the development of new types of macro-urban settlement systems, for which the well-known concepts and notions are no longer adequate and so require either the trouble of learning the traditional, even though poorly known, outside the milieu of specialists, concepts and notions or going the easy way in search of new ones in the belief that only the new is of value.

The discussion of forms of macro-urban settlement took place in the literature in the 1960s in the West and somewhat later in Poland. Concepts relating to the forms have thus not long been known or even grounded in the scientific literature. This does not change the fact that they are poorly known in political and journalistic circles, and even within some social sciences, including sociology.

The issues of the forms of macro-urban settlement includes four main topics, i.e. concepts, delimitation, social containment, and governance.

Two types of works can be distinguished in the discussion of macro-urban forms of settlement, i.e. cognitive and planning, which differ in goals and cannot thus be confused. This postulate, methodologically essential, was not, however, always fulfilled. The investigation and presentation of the actual state of affairs in the present or recent past is the goal of the cognitive works. Of the planning works, on the contrary, the goal is to project an optimal structure in terms of the criteria adopted for the foreseeable future (Rykiel 2002).

Cognitive works are the main subject of further consideration. Structural and functional approaches can be distinguished among them. In the former, a contiguous area defined on the basis of its, differentially understood, internal structure is recognised as urban. The structure was identified on the basis of one variable, a few variables or their mathematical transformations (Iwanicka-Lyra 1969; Rykiel 1978). Within the structural approach, morphological, formal (administrative), and strict structural approaches can be identified. Within the former, the urban area is defined as a contiguous built-up area. In the functional approach, on the contrary, the area with sufficiently intensive interrelationships with the city centre is recognised as urban.

The macro-urban forms of settlement can be considered in two basic spatial scales, i.e. local and supra-local. Urban structures used to be referred to in the former case, and regional structures in the latter (Rykiel 1989). The two main approaches – functional and structural – can be applied to each of the scales, the latter being further divided into morphological, formal, and strict structural.

A number of main types of urban forms can be identified on the local scale. These are: the city, urbanised area, and conurbation in the structural approach; city, and urban aggregation in the formal approach; and urban agglomeration in the strict structural approach; in the functional approach, on the contrary, city, metropolitan area, urban complex, and, perhaps, metropolis can be identified. On the supra-local scale, the following structures can be identified: megalopolis in the structural approach; and daily urban system, (functional) urban region, urban field, and metropolitan region in the functional approach. As can thus be seen, the structural approach applies mostly to the local scale, and the functional approach to the supra-local scale (Table 1).

Table 1. Main concepts of macro-urban settlement forms in the cognitive approach

Spatial scale	Cognitive approach			
	functional	structural		
		morphological	formal	strict structural

local	- city
	
	- metropolitan area
	
	- urban complex
	
	- metropolis?
		- city
		
		- urbanised area[3]
		
		- conurbation
			- city
			
			- urban
			
			  aggregation
				- urban
				
				  agglomeration
				
				- 'urban region'

regional	- daily urban system
	
	- (functional) urban
	
	  region
	
	- urban field
	
	- metropolitan
	
	  region
				- megalopolis

Source: based on Rykiel 2002

These concepts are accurately described in literature (Korcelli 1974; Rykiel 2002; Rykiel, Kowalewski, 2004), although non-sociological, and this fact releases the present author from their detailed discussion herein to recall the key elements of the concepts.

The notion of *city* was not defined in studies on the identification and delimitation of the forms of macro-urban settlement. The city in its administrative limits, assumed implicitly as a core of a more extensive settlement structure, was generally taken for analyses in the functional or even structural approaches.

The notion of *urbanised area*, widespread in the American literature, applies to a strictly defined spatial scale. It is a contiguous built-up area delineated routinely around towns sized 50,000 or over. The extent of the urbanised area is identified on the basis of topographic maps and aerial or satellite photographs, as well as on-site

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[3] There are two Polish equivalents of urbanised area, related to different concepts: (1) *obszar zurbanizowany*, related to the U.S. concept, and (2) *obszar umiastowiony*, conceived by W. Wdowiak (1965). Unless otherwise stated, the former is discussed in this paper.

inspections (Korcelli 1967). This term (Polish: *obszar zurbanizowany*) gave a lingual calque (*obszar umiastowiony*), referring, however, to a modified concept (Wdowiak 1965).

Conurbation, a proximate notion to the above, applies to another spatial scale and refers to a definitely macro-urban settlement. In British practice, it applies to settlement structures sized ca 1,000,000 (Korcelli 1967); in Polish practice a significantly lower limit is allowed. Conurbation is understood as a complex of contiguous towns and industrial settlements among which there is no main centre (Dziewoński 1956). It is more an area of urban investment than built-up, even though the difference between the two may be slight. The extent of conurbations is identified on the base of topographic maps and the knowledge of the area of the autopsy (Rykiel 1989). Conurbation is therefore an aggregation of towns and industrial settlements that compose a contiguous urbanised area, in which towns transfigure imperceptibly into one another, forming a city together (Latin: *con* – together; *urbs* – town).

The notion of *agglomeration* is much more general and thus less unequivocal that the former ones. In the context of settlement it was spread especially in French literature, in which it designates any compact settlement sized over 500 (Dalmasso 1984). Even though such a meaning of agglomeration has not been widespread outside the French-speaking countries, an attributive is necessary to add for precision. In the context of macro-urban settlement, terms *urban agglomeration* and *macro-urban agglomeration* are thus used (Iwanicka-Lyra 1969; Rykiel 1978). An aggregation of towns and non-farm settlements around an urban centre is recognised as an urban agglomeration (Iwanicka-Lyra 1969).

The notion of urban agglomeration aligns with the strict structural, i.e. not morphological, approach. The urban agglomeration is thus identified on the base of selected characteristics of regional structure rather than the, visible on topographic maps, extent of urban built-up area. Macro-urbanism and, in contrast to conurbation, monocentrism are important features of urban agglomerations. The latter feature refers, however, to the functional concept.

Metropolitan area is the most well-known functional concept of macro-urban settlement. In the United States, the notion applies to an area related functionally

(mostly by daily commuting) with a town sized over 50,000. When examining the functional relations a methodological question arises, however, of the areal unit whose relations with the city are to be examined. For practical reasons, territorial administrative units were taken, the more so that metropolitan areas were delineated mainly for statistical goals; counties were thus generally taken as the respective territorial units, in the areas of the population density comparable with European standard townships were, however, taken instead (Korcelli 1967).

In Polish literature, *urban complex* (*zespół miejski*) was proposed as a functional concept of macro-urban settlement convergent with the American metropolitan area. The difference between the two was that the concept of the urban complex, as opposed to that of metropolitan area, was a town-planning concept (Lier 1965), even though the very term was rather ambiguous (Iwanicka-Lyra 1969). The notion of the Warsaw urban complex received statutory sanction in 1947, followed by nine further urban complexes of over 200,000 inhabitants in 1961 (Rykiel 1989).

In statistical elaborations the term *urban complexes* was sometimes used (Statystyka miast... 1967) to design *urban aggregations* (*zgrupowania miast*), i.e. groupings of contiguous administrative areas of legally defined towns (Gontarski 1980). The notion of the urban aggregation was thus related not to the functional approach but to structural, within which it constituted its formal (administrative) approach.

The concept of *daily urban system* is based on the assumption that probabilistically understood participation level rather than deterministic number of inhabitants is a more adequate measure of the size of the contemporary large city (Alonso 1971). This concept, close to the sociological concept of participation as a group-creating factor, is, regrettably, hardly known to sociologists, or at least the Polish ones.

In connection with the mutual separation of places of living, working, services, and recreation, the traditionally understood city ceases to be an area of the location of the urban collectivity for the area, which daily spatial behaviour of the collectivity tend to be closed within, i.e. daily urban system (Korcelli 1976), the delimitation of the respective metropolitan labour market being the first approximation of the delimitation of the daily urban system (Hall et al., 1973).

The concept of *urban region*, often referred to, even though tautologically, as *functional urban region* (Korcelli 1981), is based on the observation that daily urban systems do not cover the whole country since they only cover the areas, which daily spatial behaviour of macro-urban collectivities are closed within, while the human behaviour cannot be reduced to the sum of daily behaviours simply because the repertoire of spatial behaviours also includes ones of a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual cycle. On this basis, the entire country is thus divided exhaustively between urban regions since there are no areas within the ecumene that in a long enough cycle (up to annual, however) are unrelated with any of the regional centres (Duncan et al., 1960; Dziewoński 1971; Rykiel 1989, 2002).

The concept of *metropolitan region*, poorly known in the Polish literature, is an extension of the concept of the urban region. The former is based on the observation that the country can be exhaustively divided between the ranges of the influence of supra-regional centres (McKenzie 1933), identified recently more and more often, even though by no means obviously, with metropolises (McKenzie 1933), but rather with a later concept of *main cities* (Dziewoński 1980; Rykiel 1985b). The influence of the metropolises cannot be, however, reduced to the spatial behaviour of the inhabitants of the metropolises and regions but also includes other social, if not economic, relationships. The metropolitan regions may thus be identified with social regions of the first order, i.e. macro-regions (Rykiel 2002), while urban regions are those of the second order (mezzo-regions). Empirical investigation indicated that 11 metropolitan regions and 42 urban regions can be identified in Poland (Rykiel, Żurkowa, 1984).

In Polish literature the term metropolitan region (*region metropolitalny*) was used ephemerally in a different meaning, i.e. as urban agglomeration or even urban complex, i.e. in more planning than cognitive sense (Lier 1965); in this meaning *'metropolitan region'* in quotation marks was included in Table 1.

The concept of *urban field* is, in a sense, the opposite of all the discussed above concepts of regional structures. It refers to the classical concept of core and periphery, paying, however, attention to having happen, sooner or later, decline of the, known from the former concepts, era of the domination of the core over the periphery (Friedmann, Miller, 1965). The concept of urban field applies to the post-

industrial era and the characteristic of it growth in employment in the tertiary and, especially, quarter sector, including a substitution of physical flows by information flows (Lisowski 2003). The location of activity, and thus also jobs, related to the two sectors is much less determined by the development of technical infrastructure and agglomeration advantages. In view of the technological progress in transport and, especially, telecommunication the extent of daily contacts of the urban collectivity not only greatly expands but also changes towards the loss of the functional dominance of the centre over the periphery. This leads to a decline of spatial integration as a condition for social integration and a growth in the role of spatially non-contiguous structures as well as non-hierarchical patterns of innovation diffusion.

The emergence of various forms of metropolitan de-concentration, including edge and corridor cities (Batten 1995; Gilli 2002; Le Goix 2002) may be the first stage of the development of urban fields. The type of relations between the core and periphery then evolves. The growing importance of the periphery is a result of the growth in its economic attractiveness and competitiveness. The peripheral zone's acquisition of the functions previously concentrated in the metropolis is a result of the expansion of the spatial scale of the relationships of the city with its umland. A policentric settlement complex, integrated functionally rather than spatially, is one result of this development (Korcelli 1974), an atrophy of social ties based on the neighbourhood for dispersed spatially functional ties is another (Dziewoński 1971).

A question of the spatial scale, and thus also the hierarchical level, of urban fields is important. It does not seem obvious whether or not the concept of urban field is related with a clearly defined spatial scale, even though the scale appears more regional or sub-regional than local. Urban field is therefore a specific type of social region whose development is closely related to urban growth and a transformation of spatial structures. The specificity of this region is in the fact that it is probably the only type of social region not based on the dominance of the regional centre over the peripheries.

The concept of urban field includes the notion of the core combined by the regional centre (or metropolis) and the periphery defined by the extent of daily contacts, whereas the importance of the periphery grows at the expense of the

regional centre. It may thus be concluded in this context that the concept of urban field is a modification of the daily urban system, characterised by policentric patterns, i.e. dispersed polarisation (Lisowski 2003).

An empirical analysis indicated a possibility of the existence of an urban field in the Cuiavian-Pomeranian voivodeship (Rykiel, Kowalewski, 2004). The reasons for the emergence of the urban field right there include a dense settlement network, as a result of its policentrism, and thus also a weaker than elsewhere dominance of the core over the periphery. The structure of the urban field develops under low or moderate population density and a rather regular pattern of the settlement network, in which a high variation of the attractiveness of the natural environment as well as the existence of spatial barriers or gravitation zones favours the development of linear forms within such a structure (Korcelli 1974). These characteristics of the regional settlement system indicate why the development of urban fields cannot be expected in eastern Poland, which is highly dominated hierarchically by the supra-regional centres of Warsaw, Lublin, and Białystok.

Finally, the notion of *megalopolis* denotes a large, spatially contiguous complex of adjacent urban agglomerations or metropolitan areas. The notion is based on the structural approach to macro-urban settlement, however formal rather than morphological. The size of the megalopolis is of several hundred kilometres of extent with a population of tens of millions (Gottmann 1961). On the eastern shore of the United States, the megalopolis stretches over 700 km; on the British Isles the megalopolis covers almost the whole of England. It is therefore doubtful that this form of settlement could be expected in Poland in the foreseeable future.

6. Methods and criteria of delimitation

The following considerations on methods and criteria of delimitation are limited to urban structures while regional structures are omitted.

Criteria for the delimitation of macro-urban settlement structures were different for different approaches to and concepts of the structures. Most of the literature was, however, devoted to the structural approaches and the related notion of urban agglomeration. Conceptually, delimitations of urban agglomerations were done within the concept of urbanisation. Methodologically, the very delimitations

were thus based almost exclusively on measurements recognised as ones of urbanisation while it was rarely added explicitly that measurements of urbanisation under the given socio-economic circumstances rather than of urbanisation in general were concerned (Iwanicka-Lyra 1969). Alternatively, it was assumed that delimitations of urban agglomerations may be done by the analysis of the structure of social space. Methodologically, it was to say that delimitations of urban agglomerations may be done on the base of characteristics of the space, i.e. ones that need not to be recognised as measurements of urbanisation since the very spatial pattern of the characteristics allows to distinguish macro-urban areas from their surroundings (Rykiel 1978).

In works by Polish authors, delimitations of urban agglomerations were done on the base of one indicator or a set of indicators. The set is presented and discussed elsewhere (Rykiel 2002).

In the case of the critical values of the indicators, either specific numerical size or those related to the national average were taken. In any case, however, it was obviously assumed that the delimitation of all Polish urban agglomerations may be done not only on the basis of the same general set of diagnostic variables but even the very same critical values of the variables.

In this context, the only method of the delimitation that deviated from the unfounded assumption was that of the summary indicator of characteristics (Iwanicka-Lyra 1969). The method was, admittedly, based on the set of the same five diagnostic variables, different wages, determined by a team of experts, were, however, attributed to individual variables in each of the agglomerations. It can be stated after over forty years that, from the methodological point of view, it is the only method of delimitation of urban agglomerations in Poland that stood the test of time. The proposed principle of the relative rules of identification of urban agglomerations from their surroundings, then, was confirmed empirically in studies of the structure of social space (Rykiel 1978), which found a solid conceptual background in the theory of social region (Dziewoński 1967; Rykiel 2011), and was therefore accepted in standard delimitation procedures (Rykiel 1997). As other studies indicate, urban agglomerations in Poland are entities of a regional rather than national scale (Rykiel 1978), and this fact is confirmed not only by the spatial pattern of structural variables

but also of interrelationships (Rykiel 1985a). This is to say that the agglomerations do not meet the metropolitan criteria.

This observation is certainly depressing for it means a lack of a method allowing for a reliable, i.e. consistent with reality, delimitation of urban agglomerations on the national scale according to uniform criteria. In a wider perspective, it means a necessity to abandon a nice thought that in a finite – preferably slight – number of acts of cognition it is possible to attain absolute truth about even as a minor slice of reality as the delimitation of urban agglomerations in a medium-sized country.

7. Terminological standardisation or misconception

The concern of the issue and delimitation of macro-urban forms of settlement happened in Poland at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. After the completion of the, abovementioned attempts at the delimitation of very diverse methodological values, an attempt was made to order the terminology in the early 1970s (Aglomeracje miejskie..., 1973). The project was repeated 30 years later (Markowski, Marszał, 2006). Both attempts were clearly normatively oriented. Such projects were, however, difficult to conduct because individual terms were previously used in specified meanings and contexts that were difficult to change and unify. The normative tendencies resulted not only from the attempt to get precise terminology but also from a methodological monism that assumed that only one correct set of relations between names and concepts exists or at least should exist. As a result, efforts to standardise terminology showed symptoms of nominalism because a generally accepted term was sought for the form of the macro-urban settlement while the fact was ignored that such an action could hardly reduce the number of related concepts; this resulted from the fact that fundamental differences in the concept of the forms of macro-urban settlement have existed so even standardised terms must have left many different meanings.

The terminological discussion was thus reduced to a false dilemma whether agglomeration or metropolitan area should be accepted as the general term for the forms of macro-urban settlement. As a result, the former was accepted as this was the

most general term. Interestingly, however, the proposal to accept the metropolitan area was criticised on the narrowly instrumental ground by arguing that, in the European tradition, a proposal to refer to towns sized 50,000 as to metropolises would be hardly possible to accept in the 20th century. In this way, however, the discussion on two concepts was reduced to a purely technical issue of the identification and delimitation of macro-urban centres.

The term *agglomeration* created yet another false dilemma, i.e. whether the core of the Katowice region is an agglomeration or a conurbation. The apparent dilemma arises from the fact that the alternative is conceptual rather than purely terminological. In fact, a narrower conurbation and wider urban agglomeration can be identified in the same area (Rykiel 1989).

The acceptance of the term *agglomeration* resulted from the fact that this was the only term, but it is very general and thus equivocal. Two basically different concepts were covered by this term in spatial studies, i.e. (1) urban agglomeration as a local settlement complex, and (2) 'agglomeration of industry' as a rather vague and not obvious synonym for an industrial belt. As a complete misunderstanding it should, on the contrary, be categorised by the term 'urban-industrial agglomeration', which appeared in publications with limited theoretical ambitions (Leszczycki et al., 1971), based on unclear logical premises, and for this reason was criticised[4] (Gontarski 1980; Rykiel 1984).

The attempt to standardise terminology ended therefore in a partial success. The term *agglomeration* was admittedly accepted in planning documents and popular texts while in scientific publications defining terms for use of each of the studies proved inevitable. The failure of attempts to standardise scientific terminology resulted primarily from a poor awareness of the connection of the terminology with the theoretical and cultural context in which the terminology was used, i.e. from a mechanical and thoughtless transfer of exotic terms and concepts to native soil.

The frustrating conclusion is that the anarchic pluralist reality can hardly be organised within uniform concepts. The second aspect of this observation is that the

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[4] Interestingly, the critique was modest for four important reasons. Firstly, industry was a fetish under communism; secondly, 'industrial' was thus perceived as providing prestige; thirdly, the formal position of the author of the 'urban-industrial agglomerations' made any criticism difficult in the, fourthly, context of feudalisation of normal science under communism.

favoured term in the socio-spatial sciences, *agglomeration*, even with adjunct *urban*, includes a multiplicity of highly ambiguous concepts hiding within it (Rykiel 2002).

8. The model of the management of metropolises[5]

Considerations of metropolitan areas in the structure of the territorial division of the country beg the question of whether these areas should constitute a new unit of the division, adjust do the already exiting units or perhaps constitute areas of joint planning, coordinated by a special agency or agencies. The question poses difficulties, and thus hardly anywhere in the world, or at least in Europe, is it satisfactorily resolved (Kaczmarek, Mikuła, 2007). In this context, the present author is inclined to see the major obstacle to the coordination of development planning in metropolitan areas in the existence of the anachronic, because conceptually nineteenth-century, county boroughs, which should thus be abolished. Metropolitan counties could be created instead, even though not necessarily under that name, that would cover large cities with their umlands or – like in the Upper Silesian Industrial District – several neighbouring cities.

In case of Warsaw, the idea of the metropolitan voivodeship is worth considering, which would, however, have both advantages and disadvantages – the former for the city and the latter for the umland. Moreover, in the case of Warsaw, a political question appears in this context on the European scale, based on the fact that the Warsaw metropolis is an enclave of development, prosperity, and abundance against the traditionally developmentally backward Masovia, which results in the overestimation of the development level on the regional scale while after the possible separation of the Warsaw metropolis the Masovian voivodeship would indicate the actual state of its development in regional statistics and could thus count on EU subsidies within the structural funds.

Generally, the management system in metropolitan areas should be the same as in the case of the lower-level territorial units across the country. This would, however, require the introduction into political practice of the, declaratively proclaimed but not necessarily observed, self-government principle of territorial

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[5] Footnote 1 applies to this section.

units below the voivodeship level. Since poviat is a self-governmental unit, the central government should not deal with either the assignment of boundaries of poviats or its centres but merely the assignment and enforcement of rules governing the distribution of funds. Communes could then voluntarily and freely combine in poviats provided that they would be able to develop financial resources for their functioning. The system should therefore be unified legally but diverse territorially, a principle that with the greatest difficulty appeals not only to politicians but also social scientists. The demand to create new poviats would then be, unlike now, related to the liability – including financial – of their functioning. If a poviat is affordable, citizens should be free to found one. This would, however, require a clear legal definition of the concept of tasks assigned by the central government to self-governmental units, the definition that the judicial community seems to opt for.

Associations of communes or poviats should be a sufficient tool for coordinating the development of metropolitan areas. The lower the number of coordinating administrative institutions the better, particularly if costs are reduced for citizens and tax payers. Agencies for the management of metropolitan areas would possibly spend off-budget spending and waste public money. Moderation in the creation of the agencies would thus be desirable. Under the Constitution, government administration does not descend below the voivodeship level and this regulation should be highly encouraged.

9. Rzeszów as a metropolis

In this context, the metropolitan ambitions of Rzeszów can be considered. The metropolitan ambitions of the municipal authorities are part of a larger question, i.e. a conviction of the authorities of medium-sized towns that the metropolitan status can be obtained by an administrative appointment or political striving. The rather common, although simplified and not necessarily justified, belief that a large enough population indicates the metropolitan rank leads to the idea of the Rzeszów metropolis that would include several neighbouring poviats, which in the area of high population density would provide the desired urban size. In this way the notion of the metropolis is, however, confused with that of metropolitan area, and actual metropolitan features with their statistical or administrative appearances.

Efforts for the liquidation of the Rzeszów county borough, what the municipal authorities are empowered for, should be the first formal-administrative step towards Rzeszów's metropolitan status. This would be, however, politically risky because it would result in an amalgamation of centre-leftist town with its right-wing surrounding. Cultural pluralism, being the social containment of metropolises, is opposed to the ideological and political conservatism of Rzeszów's surrounding. The territorial expansion of the Rzeszów metropolitan area would thus have to involve a deepening of the conservatism of the potential Rzeszów metropolis, i.e. its de facto de-metropolitisation.

Achieving actual metropolitan status is much more difficult, for it is not led by administrative striving but by the development of the supra-national metropolitan functions, which are hardly possible to identify in Rzeszów currently. The functions generating the interest of the metropolitan creative class (Florida 2010) would have crucial importance. Such functions are not, however, represented in the strategy of the development of the Subcarpathian voivodeship (Strategia…, 2006), in which as many as 30 'priorities' were identified and the main objective of the strategy was identified as 'an increasing domestic and international competitiveness of the region's economy by increasing its innovativeness and thus the efficiency, which will create conditions for increasing employment and an increase in income and the living standard of the population' (*ibidem*: 82). This shows no obvious connection with the process of metropolisation. In the strategy of the development of the city of Rzeszów, in turn 'the creation of Rzeszów as a strong centre of the Rzeszów Metropolitan Area' is declared (Główne i szczegółowe cele…, 2008: 8). This is not necessarily identical with the development of metropolitan functions.

The two basic limitations outlined above significantly weaken the possibility of the transformation of Rzeszów's metropolitan ambitions in reality, although Rzeszów's traditional social relationships with North America as well as the proximity of and traditional opening to the nearest East could be a good starting point. This would give Rzeszów a competitive advantage over even larger cities in other parts of Poland.

10. Conclusions

One may fear that, fascinated by its release from its traditional urban-rural legacy, new urban or metropolitan Polish sociology may falter by uncritically accepting the new concepts of American sociology. These imports may not be adaptable to domestic conditions. The quest for new concepts seems appropriate if the older ones are no longer adequate. To determine this, however, it would first be advisable to get to know them. Attempts to transgress the traditional sociological parochialism would thus be welcome but new metropolitan sociology abstracted from the achievements of social geography hardly seems possible.

Metropolis, even if institutionalised, is basically a social phenomenon, based on functions performed rather than political nomination. If therefore middle-sized towns wish to achieve their metropolitan status in the future, they will have to work hard and, especially, reasonably to develop these functions. Reasonable strategies of the development of the metropolitan functions, not misidentified with wishful thinking, would therefore be essential to achieve this goal.

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