

*Bohdan Jałowiecki\**

## **POLISH CITIES AND METROPOLISATION PROCESSES**

Metropolisation is one of the most dynamic processes of contemporary world, changing the existing settlement patterns and creating new relations between large cities. In the recent years, metropolisation has also come to include Central and Eastern European countries. The paper looks at the role of these countries in the European metropolitan network, and describes the process of the emergence of Polish metropolises, in addition to their social and spatial transformation.

### **General characteristics of metropolisation processes**

Metropolisation is a process whereby certain large cities assume dominant supra-national functions in the economic and political sphere, and/or modelling functions in culture. A metropolis is a city with a population of at least 500 000, characterised by such features as: excellent quality of services, institutions and facilities; innovation potential in technological, economic, political and cultural aspects, as well as the uniqueness and singularity of the place (Bassand 1997, p. 45).

Unlike cities in the industrial era, metropolises basically do not manufacture goods but provide services and generate information. They are the seats of the headquarters of huge corporations, which from here transmit orders to delocated production centres. They provide locations for banks servicing those corporations, for law offices, consulting companies and companies specialising in advertising and marketing. Metropolises are also the seats of mass-media with national or international coverage, places of luxury consumption for their residents and incoming visitors, clients and tourists.

These processes lead to a strong segmentation of the labour market, and a division into highly-qualified and well-paid specialists, and poorly-paid, threatened with unemployment workers – providers of low-quality services, many of whom work only part-time. Highly-qualified specialists make up a new social class, the so-called metropolitan class, which operates on an international scale, in a network of mutually interrelated metropolises.

Metropolises functioning within networks have stronger ties with one another than with the surrounding hinterland. The metropolis' surroundings are experiencing a fast process of peripherisation, retaining only some role as a pool

---

\* Bohdan Jałowiecki is professor at Warsaw University, Centre for European Regional and Local Studies.

of poorly-qualified labour, and – in selected locations – as a place of residence (*gated communities*) and recreation for the wealthy residents. As a result, we can observe polarisation into the centre – the metropolis, and its surroundings – the closer and further peripheries. A tendency can be observed in all the European countries to increase the existing gaps between the centre and the periphery. In some countries where these discrepancies are particularly acute, we can speak of a progressing exclusion of a large share of the periphery's residents. This is economic (labour market), but primarily social exclusion. Another type of polarisation refers to disparities within the metropolis itself. In metropolises, the contrast between wealth and poverty is most visibly felt. This is not as much due to extreme poverty, because on the whole the living standards have improved, but to a specific accumulation of wealth which is concentrated in metropolises. Strong disparities, having their roots in social and ethnic aspects (mainly in European metropolises), constantly lead to tensions and conflicts.

Spatial mobility is one of the main features of the metropolisation process; it is considerably higher in these areas than in the periphery, and is definitely increasing. Over the past decade or so, the mobility of metropolitan inhabitants in the Western countries has increased more than threefold. Until recently, a metropolis dweller would daily cover a distance of three kilometres; now it is 10. Mobility underpins all social and spatial relations as it helps us to establish bonds and ties with other people and places. Not a specific place, but a space of flows is becoming the area for social interaction. Therefore restrictions in mobility lead to social exclusion and marginalisation (Chalas 2001).

A metropolitan community is structured in many interdependent networks enabling the mobility of people, goods and information. A new kind of dense though superficial and individualised social relations is emerging. Socialisation is changing in nature, towards – as Castells put it – its privatisation. After a period of mechanical solidarity typical of village communities, and organic solidarity, characteristic of village communities of the industrial society, the so-called (Ascher 2004) 'commutative' (alternating) solidarity is emerging.

Individualisation of needs and behaviours is accompanied by a growing dependency of the metropolitan residents on technological systems, which means a higher risk of disorganisation in case of their breakdown, just as it happened, for instance, in recent power failures in the US, Canada or Italy. Metropolitan residents are more exposed to risks related environmental pollution, car accidents and terrorist raids than inhabitants of peripheral areas. Such threats can produce existential stress.

### **Central European cities in the European metropolitan network**

One of the characteristic features of contemporary metropolisation is the weakening of the metropolis' ties with its direct hinterland and the strengthening of its relations with other metropolises. The degree of inclusion of Central

European metropolises into European and global networks is shown in the results of the survey entitled *Globalisation and World Cities – Study Group & Network*.

Table 1. Selected cities in the European network of relations

Order	Global linkages	Index	Order	Linkages between banks and financial institutions	Index
1	London	1.00	1	London	1.00
2	Paris	0.70	2	Paris	0.79
3	Milan	0.60	3.	Frankfurt	0.70
4	Amsterdam	0.59	4	Madrid	0.69
5	Frankfurt	0.57	5	Milan	0.63
6	Brussels	0.56	6	Brussels	0.59
7	Zurich	0.48	7	Istanbul	0.55
8	Stockholm	0.44	8	Amsterdam	0.54
9	Prague	0.43	9	Warsaw	0.53
9	Dublin	0.43	10	Düsseldorf	0.51
9	Barcelona	0.43	11	Moscow	0.50
10	Moscow	0.42	.....		
10	Istanbul	0.42	15	Berlin	0.45
10	Vienna	0.42	16	Prague	0.44
10	Warsaw	0.42	17	Budapest	0.41
11	Lisbon	0.41	25	Bucharest	0.23
11	Budapest	0.41			
....					
13	Berlin	0.36			
18	Bucharest	0.25			

Source: Taylor 2003.

The measure of the intensity of such linkages are relations maintained by companies operating in the corporate service sector (advertising, accounting, banking/finance, insurance, consultancies, law firms). The survey was initiated in 2001 by Taylor, Catalano and Walker, and covered 100 companies. Cities were categorised in terms of the presence of a given company on a scale from 1 (absent) to 5 (corporate headquarters). It can be said therefore that the degree of relations of a given city in the network of global metropolises is measured on the basis of the extent of presence of the surveyed enterprises in the largest number of cities. For every city, the strength of the relation is shown as a percentage to the most strongly linked city – London. In the study in question (Taylor 2003), the relations of 35 European metropolises were subject to scrutiny. According to this classification, Warsaw was ranked among the first ten cities, before such capitals as Lisbon, Budapest, Berlin, Rome, Athens, Oslo, Helsinki and Bucharest, and was ranked at a slightly better position in the category of banks and financial institutions.

Taylor also classified 25 European cities in a network of global relations, taking into account the relations between banks, mass-media and NGOs. In

this classification, Warsaw was ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in the banking/finance category and 22<sup>nd</sup> in the mass-media category. At the same time, it was not ranked at all in the network of NGOs and research institutions. The survey shows that the capital of Poland plays a major role in the network of European cities and has a potential to become the strategic metropolis in Central and Eastern Europe (Bourdeau-Lepage 2004a).

### Metropolisation processes in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries

The cities of the post-socialist countries are now trying to catch up; their occupational and social structures are changing, with an increasing role of services and a widening social and spatial polarisation. Suburbanisation processes can be observed, which is accompanied by the emergence of residential neighbourhoods at their outskirts. As a result of foreign investment projects, the areas of central cities are changing in character – new tall office and residential buildings appear, and international chain hotels open. Some areas with a potential for tourism are revitalised.

Changes in the occupational structure lead to transformations in the city's social and spatial structure. Those employed in the higher-order service sector are usually better educated and better paid; they buy or rent quality apartments and allocate a large portion of their income to consumption, thus providing an attractive clientele for the shopping centres.

Table 2. Structure of employment in selected metropolises

Employment	Bucharest		Budapest		Prague		Sofia		Warsaw		Paris	
	1994 <sup>1</sup>	2001	1995	2001	1994	2001	1996 <sup>1</sup>	2000	1994	2001	1994	2001
Industry	–	24.3	18.1	14.4	14.8	10.5	–	17.3	25.6	14.8	8.4	6.1
Finance	–	2.8	3.5	3.4	3.2	4.9	–	3.2	6.0	7.8	11.1	8.9
Business services	–	11.5	6.5	11.2	12.7	12.8	–	13.6	14.9	15.0	18.2	22.2
<b>Higher-order services</b>	–	<b>14.3</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>14.6</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>17.7</b>	–	<b>16.8</b>	<b>20.9</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>31.2</b>

<sup>1</sup> Incomparable data.

Source: L. Bourdeau-Lepage, 2004a.

Research conducted by Lise Bourdeau-Lepage, who has been studying metropolisation processes in the post-socialist countries for a number of years, shows that disindustrialisation can be observed in all the cities. This process has been the fastest in Warsaw, although the percentage of those employed in the production sector is similar to that in Budapest and higher than in Prague. On the other hand, Warsaw has a highest percentage of those employed in the financial sector and other higher-order services.

Generally, however, it can be said that metropolisation processes in the post-socialist countries are most easily visible in their capital cities. This phenomenon can be illustrated by an example from Poland.

Table 3. Concentration of activities in Polish potential metropolises

	Industry	Construction	Market services			Non-market services	Total services
			Total	Finance	Corporate		
<b>Warsaw</b>	<b>0.80</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>1.20</b>	<b>1.50</b>	<b>1.30</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>1.08</b>
Wrocław	0.90	1.10	0.95	0.94	0.99	1.10	1.01
Poznań	1.00	1.10	0.98	0.80	0.90	1.00	0.98
Kraków	1.00	1.30	0.90	0.60	0.96	1.10	0.97
Gdańsk	1.10	1.10	0.90	0.70	0.80	1.10	0.97
Łódź	1.30	0.70	0.90	0.70	0.80	1.10	0.93
Average	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00

The concentration index is a ratio of employment in activity x to total employment in this activity to total employment in a given location to total employment in a given sector in all locations, divided by total employment in all sectors and all locations. Source: Bourdeau-Lepage 2004b.

This table shows the share of Warsaw in particular types of activity as compared to other potential metropolises. The findings from Bourdeau-Lepage's studies not only confirm the high ranking of Poland's capital city, but also that of Wrocław and Poznań, which is also corroborated by Polish research. For instance, on the scale showing the categorisation of Polish cities in terms of 18 traits characterising their economic situation, Warsaw comes first, ahead of Poznań and Wrocław, and is followed by Kraków (Cracow) and Gdańsk as other potential metropolises, with Łódź having the least advantageous position (Kin-Dittmann, Mika 2004, p. 177–178).

It has to be admitted, however, that Warsaw occupies a unique position among Poland's metropolises. 500 of Poland's largest enterprises have their corporate headquarters in the city. Consultancy is another fast-growing sector in the country's capital, with a rise from 9 to 432 over the last 10 years. The number of law firms and notary offices is also increasing rapidly: in 2000, there were 714 lawyer's offices and 94 notary offices, as compared to, respectively, 599 and 65 in 1996 (Wilk 2001).

Observation of the transformation processes in Poland indicates that metropolitan areas are developing faster than voivodships (provinces) they are situated in. In particular, this is true with regard to Kraków, Warsaw and Poznań. In addition to that, the gap between the cities and the areas surrounding them is also widening at a fast pace. Depending on the size of a given city, its radius of influence reaches 20–50 km. Outside this area, stagnation or even regression can be observed, which is due to the 'draining' of the area of human and material resources (Gorzela 2002; Smętkowski 2001).

Although an extrapolation of the current trends carries certain risks, especially in the long-term perspective, it can be anticipated that globalisation of economy and related phenomena facilitating metropolisation processes will intensify in the coming decades, including Poland. This is mainly due to technological developments and contribution of science to economic development, which has the nature of a network, with metropolises as hubs of such networks.

If we make such an assumption, only Warsaw – which has the greatest research, financial and information potential and is the key decision centre – has a real chance to develop into a metropolis. Owing to these features, the capital, in spite of its many weaknesses, will continue to develop faster than other cities.

The success of the remaining potential metropolises will largely depend on their relation to European space. In this regard, Poznań and Wrocław enjoy a most advantageous position. Kraków, with its unsurpassed potential for tourism, can become even more attractive if it becomes easier and more convenient to access by plane, car or train. Tricity (Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot), with its peripheral location, is in a much less favourable situation than Poznań, Wrocław and Kraków. Of the four cities, it has the slightest chance to step up its development because it has the weakest research potential, in addition to an unfavourable location. Another drawback is the impossibility to pursue one development policy for this area by the three local governments, which prefer to compete than to collaborate. On the other hand, however, an unquestionable advantage of Tricity is that it has the greatest potential for tourism, after Kraków. Among the six potential metropolises, Łódź is undoubtedly the one with the smallest potential for development, with its economic stagnation and population regression.

**Among potential metropolises, the Upper Silesia conurbation occupies a special role; it consists of about a dozen cities, of which each has a different economic and town-planning situation. The four cities: Gliwice, Katowice and Tychy, and, to some extent, Dąbrowa Górnicza are in the most advantageous situation. In the remaining cities of the conurbation, there are many post-industrial areas, with major parts of the city in decay. Recultivation of post-industrial areas and revitalisation of cities is going to be a lengthy and costly process. Taking into account the experiences of other countries (the Ruhr, Pas de Calais) and with an optimistic approach, this may take 30 to 40 years.**

### **Spatial and social transformation**

In the metropolises of post-socialist countries, business centres modelled on the so-called CBDs (Central Business Districts), which are common in many metropolises of the world, are emerging. A CBD is also taking shape in Warsaw, which is manifested through a concentration of various business activities in the very centre of the city (Śleszyński 2004).

Foreign direct investments are changing the face of post-socialist cities and give them a cosmopolitan and Americanised look. Such cities are characterised by marked contrasts between areas of modern office and residential architecture and luxury shopping malls on the one hand, and huge residential complexes from the socialist era and degraded social space on the other. In addition, cities in these countries will have to cope with many years of neglect in the

development and revitalisation of downtown areas, renovation of old buildings, transformation of huge residential complexes and upgrading of infrastructure.

Table 4. Location of higher-order services in Warsaw

	Consultancies	Law firms	Notary offices	Banks	Corporate headquarters
Central borough ( <i>gmina Centrum</i> )	86.3%	91.9%	91.5%	84.5%	77.0%
including Śródmieście	44.9%	63.3%	67.0%	41.7%	26.1%
Mokotów	14.1%	8.5%	6.4%	13.6%	13.3%
Wola	9.3%	7.7%	7.4%	13.6%	17.0%
Peripheral boroughs	13.7%	8.1%	8.5%	15.5%	23.0%
Warsaw	100.0%				
Total	432	714	94	206	165

Source: Bourdeau-Lepage 2004b; Wilk 2001. Data for 1999–2000.

The modernisation efforts taken so far are relatively superficial in nature. In Prague, there is a striking contrast between the revitalised tourist area stretching from the Castle (Hradcany) to the Old Town Square and the degraded space of many other parts of the city dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as huge residential complexes from the socialist era. A similar phenomenon can also be observed in Budapest. On the other hand, old areas in Warsaw are not revitalised because there are very few of them, with the exception of the borough of Praga on the right bank of the Vistula river. Characteristically, however, enclaves of modernity are emerging in unbuilt-up areas of Warsaw in the form of office buildings, luxury hotels and apartment blocks in the vicinity of degraded urban space. Piotrkowska street in Łódź can be regarded as an example of revitalisation ‘in the Polish way’, where (with a few exceptions) only the buildings’ ground floors housing shops have been refurbished and the facades painted, while the backyards of the adjacent across streets remain utterly degraded areas, mainly populated by the so-called dregs of society.

Cities which were not devastated during World War II are in a better situation because their old urban architecture structuring the space has been preserved. In those cities, revitalisation of downtown areas is still possible. Cities which were largely destroyed are facing much more serious problems in this respect. Warsaw is one of them; its flattened city centre has not been rebuilt, but was replaced by chaotic, disordered, low-standard residential and office buildings and the Palace of Science and Culture, erected in an empty, huge central square. This chaos in the city’s central space was further aggravated by random locations of office buildings and blocks which were built after 1990. In such a situation, metropolitan services (luxury shops, recreation facilities) are most frequently located at the very boundaries of the centre, in American-style shopping malls. It can be said therefore that important metropolitan functions are thus ‘washed out’ of the city centre.

Warsaw's consumption space (and, to a lesser extent, also that of Poznań and Tricity) is dominated by shopping malls, especially multi-purpose facilities, which concentrate shopping, services and recreation functions and sometimes include offices and hotels. At the end of 2004, there were over 30 shopping centres in Warsaw, including 6 new-generation shopping malls, with one facility of this kind, reportedly the largest in Europe, is currently under construction. The floor area of 'Złote Tarasy' (Golden Terraces) is planned to total 225 000 sq.m., including 65 000 sq.m. for a shopping mall, cinema and an entertainment area. In Poznań, the number of shopping centres – nine – is more modest, whereas Tricity has eight such centres.

A unique shopping gallery located in the historic building of an old paper mill in the residence complex of Konstancin-Jeziorna is an interesting example. The investor expected that the facility would attract not only the opulent local clientele, but also – owing to its prestigious location – clients from Warsaw.

Some of the middle class with high incomes adopt a specific lifestyle and transform into the metropolitan class. The basic traits of such a lifestyle include career ambitions, workaholism, casual sexual relations, postponed establishment of a family, and especially having children, luxury consumption, relatively broad international contacts, a considerably high degree of local uprootedness and a distinctly cosmopolitan identity. Unlike traditional bourgeoisie, the status of the metropolitan class is mainly based on its capital of competences which are vital for the functioning of modern society. The emergence of the Polish metropolitan class and its characteristic style of behaviour is reflected in space because its members live in the so-called luxury apartment buildings or suburban gated communities.

Even though such luxury apartment buildings represent a tiny share of all residential buildings constructed, owing to their distinctive features they carry a specific social message. The number of buildings of this kind in Warsaw does not exceed 100, with about 5 000 apartments in total. A large majority (approximately 85%) of apartment buildings are located in the former central borough, of which nearly a half can be found in the borough of Mokotów. In addition to security service, standard facilities in such buildings include an underground garage (95% of investment projects), and recreational amenities in some of them (gym, swimming pool, indoor greenery).

Among suburban estates Konstancin is a particularly exclusive location. Its residence function dates back to the pre-war period. In the socialist period, the place lost a lot of its charm, and started to regain some of its splendour after 1990. Konstancin, dubbed 'Polish Beverly Hills' by national glossy magazines, has become the permanent (though in some cases temporary) residence of the new bourgeoisie, the metropolitan class, and naturally the celebrities. 'Among those who buy historic villas – writes the author of an interesting work about Konstancin – two categories can be distinguished: genuine lovers of beauty who restore the houses to their former resplendence, though not always to the original shape, preferring to turn them into veritable mansions, and those who



adopt the ‘Konstantinian’ approach to renovation and conservation of old buildings – instead of costly repair works, they purposefully bring the buildings to ruin, demolish them and build new residences, which in extreme cases can be three times as big as the original ones. This method has led to the destruction of one fourth of all the buildings’ (Siemińska 2004).

Snobbery is the vital factor for the price of the real property, which must be in close vicinity to a celebrity. Another important factor is the house’s architecture. One of the estate agents with many years of experience in selling million-dollar villas, claims they must be ‘absolutely impressive’. Invariably, Classicistic palaces and houses in the modernist style have been in fashion for years. It is considered good form to have an estate set in an old-growth forest, and the size of several thousand square metres, preferable over a hectare. The residence is normally furnished with a tennis court and a swimming pool with the walls and the bottom covered with Byzantine tiles, and in many cases a sauna, a bowling alley, an orangery and a gardener’s house. It is easy to lose one’s way in the spacious houses with corridor floors set in different kinds of timber. Provence-style kitchens, cellars where expensive wines are kept and rooms for making bouquets are not infrequently met (Pol 2003, p. 121). The fencing is also a showcase of the residence. A sumptuous drive increases the property’s value and gives a credit to its owner. Since the residents do not want to be in public eye, they build their super-luxury fortresses inaccessible to outsiders, surrounded with tall defence walls and sentry towers (Seidler 2002; Siemińska 2004).

Konstancin is only one example of suburbanisation. The well-off residents of Warsaw work in the city but move to the suburban zone, seeking better conditions to live. The estate agents’ offer is varied, ranging from several million-dollar properties to much more modest ones, sold by developers in fenced-in and protected estates.

Table 5. Population with higher education in 1988–2002 in Warsaw’s metropolitan area

Population	1988		2002		Change 1988–2002	
	in thousand	%	in thousand	%	w %	in % points
Warszawa	211 456	66.6%	351 255	58.2%	66.1%	–8.4%
Metropolitan area	40 959	12.9%	107 168	17.7%	161.6%	4.9%

Source: prepared by Smełkowski on the basis of Central Statistical Office (GUS) data (national census).

The data concerning migration indicate that in 1988–2002 the population of the metropolitan area with tertiary education grew by over 60 000. Other data suggest that in 1970–2002 the population of the Śródmieście (central) borough in Warsaw decreased from over 200 000 to 140 000 (Swianiewicz 2004).

The tendencies which manifested themselves in the metropolises of Western Europe much earlier are now visible in Warsaw (Berger 2004). The metropolitan labour market for highly qualified labour is relatively stable and the incomes of senior executives and professionals allow them to freely choose

their place of residence. Depending on the family situation, either single-family houses set in green areas are sought – which fosters suburbanisation processes, or luxury apartments in the central part of the metropolis – which lead to the bourgeoisisation of certain areas of the city. The emergence of Warsaw's new social and spatial structure is one of the manifestations of the city's increasingly metropolitan character.

## References

- Acher F., 2004, *Les Nouveaux principes de l'urbanisme*, Paris: L'Aube.
- Bassand M., 1997, *Métropolisation et inégalités sociales*, Lausanne: Presses polytechniques et universitaires romandes.
- Berger M., 2004, *Les périurbains de Paris. De la ville dense à la métropole éclatée ?*, Paris: CNRS Edition.
- Bourdeau-Lepage L., 2004a, 'Metropolization in Central and Eastern Europe: Unequal Chances', *GaWC Research Bulletin*, No. 141.
- Bourdeau-Lepage L., 2004b, 'Varsovie une nouvelle métropole', *GaWC Research Bulletin*, No. 142.
- Chalas Y., 2001, *Villes contemporaines*, Paris: Ed. Cercle d'Art.
- Gorzela G., 2002, 'Polskie regiony w procesie integracji europejskiej', *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, No. 2–3.
- Kin-Dittmann I., Mika E., 2004, 'Sytuacja gospodarcza Wrocławia na tle miast wojewódzkich' [in:] S. Korenik, K. Szolka, 'Konkurencyjność i potencjał rozwoju polskich metropolii', *Biuletyn KPZK*, No. 214.
- Pol Z., 2003, 'W kaloszach na salony', *National Geographic*, No. 11.
- Seidler B., 2002, 'Warszawskie Beverly Hills', *Życie Warszawy*, No. 227.
- Siemińska R., 2004, *Konstancin-Jeziorna jako miasto rezydencjalne*, unpublished master's thesis at the Centre for European Regional and Local Studies (EUROREG), Warszawa.
- Smętkowski M., 2001, 'Nowe relacje między metropolią a regionem w gospodarce informacyjnej', *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, No. 4.
- Swianiewicz P., 2004, 'Obszary metropolitalne – wewnętrzna dynamika zmian' [in:] A. Kukliński (ed.), *Globalizacja Warszawy – strategiczny problem XXI wieku*, Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza 'Rewasz'.
- Śleszyński P., 2004, *Kształtowanie się zachodniej części centrum Warszawy*, Warszawa: IGiPZ PAN.
- Taylor P.J., 2003, 'European Cities in the World City Network', *GaWC Research Bulletin*, No. 105.
- Veltz P., 2004, *Des lieux et des liens. Politique du territoire à l'heure de la mondialisation*, Paris: L'Aube.
- Wilk W., 2001, *Czynniki lokalizacji i rozmieszczenie wybranych usług w Warszawie*, Warszawa: Wydział Geografii i Studiów Regionalnych UW.