

Chapter 5

Theories of Metropolitan Government and the Post-socialist Experience: The Case of Poznań Metropolitan Area

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Abstract This paper, based on ongoing research in the Poznan metropolitan region, contrasts theoretical approaches to the issue of metropolitan governance in America and Western Europe with the practical experience of a post-socialist country – Poland – using examples from the Poznań Metropolitan Area. International comparative studies (e.g. Jouve and Lefèvre, *Local power, territory and institutions in European metropolitan regions*. Frank Cass, London, 2002, Herrschel and Newman, *Governance of Europe's city regions: planning, policy and politics*. Routledge, London, 2002, Salet et al., *Metropolitan governance and spatial planning. Comparative case studies of European city-regions*. Spon Press, London, 2003, Heinelt and Kübler, *Metropolitan governance. Capacity, democracy and the dynamics of place*. Routledge, London, 2005) have shown that “place matters”. It is emphasised that the nation-specific “tradition” and character of administration are of importance to the metropolitan government model. The evolution of the territorial and administrative structures of the big cities and suburban areas in Poland is different from Western Europe and North America. Between 1950 and 1990, Poland has a monolithic state government system, in which the decentralisation principle did not apply. Reforms of 1990 and 1998 brought the model of territorial administration in Poland closer to European standards on the local and regional levels. However, these reforms took little consideration of issues related to the metropolitan, as opposed to the local or regional, scale in the country's territorial and administrative structure. As a consequence, few formal institutions for metropolitan governance have been created, and metropolitan governance has been neglected. This has resulted in local inequalities in the quality and provision of services, and competition among local governments for inward investment and development, often causing adverse impacts at the metropolitan scale. In Poland, in 1990, an almost instant democratic breakthrough in the political system resulted in embracing the ideals of local government and the autonomy of communes. In Poland, the model of governance in metropolitan areas has been moving towards one of public

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choice, despite being limited by central government control which continues to be strong. The country's socioeconomic development and advancing suburbanisation have created problems which can only be resolved on a metropolitan scale. The position of local governments in Poland is strong enough to make radical metropolitan reform socially and politically unlikely. At present, the only feasible solution appears to be the intensification of voluntary collaboration stimulated, perhaps, by small legislative changes at the national level. Nevertheless, as compared to the situation 20 years ago, the trend towards fragmentation has reversed. After a period in which local governments gained and secured their independence, now we are facing a stage of integration.

Keywords Problems of suburbanisation • Metropolitan governance • Metropolitan management • Local government competition and development • Local inequality

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to contrast the theoretical approaches to the issue of metropolitan governance adopted over the past several decades mainly by American and Western European scientists with the practical experience of a post-socialist country – Poland – using specific examples from the Poznań Metropolitan Area. International comparative studies (e.g. Jouve and Lefèvre 2002; Herrschel and Newman 2002; Salet et al. 2003; Heinelt and Kübler 2005) have shown that “place matters”. It is emphasised that the nation-specific “tradition” and character of administration are of importance to the metropolitan government model. The evolution of the territorial and administrative structures of the big cities and suburban areas in Poland has been different from Western European and North American countries. The most significant difference between 1950 and 1990 was the existence of a uniform state government system, in which the decentralisation principle did not apply. The reforms of 1990 and 1998 brought the model of territorial administration in Poland much closer to European standards, both on local and regional levels. However, these reforms took little consideration of issues related to the position of metropolitan areas in the country's territorial and administrative structure.

Theoretical Framework

The issue of the political and organisational integration of metropolitan communities emerged to a wider extent in the scientific perspective of the 1930s, especially among American researchers. Since annexation and the expansion of city limits ceased to be used in response to the increasing range of the urbanised land, a growing spatial mismatch emerged between the mosaic of local administration units and

the functional and economic metropolitan area (Brenner 2003). This change of approach in the political and administrative sphere coincided also with some important social and economic changes, such as the growing affluence of societies during the post-war economic boom and the resultant rapid development of low-density housing and individual motorisation. These had a direct effect on the dynamics of suburbanisation. In response to these political, administrative, social and economic challenges, two contrary theoretical “traditions” (Ostrom 1972) emerged: the idea of *metropolitan reform* and *the public choice* concept.

Metropolitan reform is, in a way, a modern version of the previous trend, i.e. the successive expansion of a big city’s administrative limits. According to its proponents, the disadvantageous social and economic effects resulting from municipal fragmentation can be eliminated by radical changes in the territorial and administrative structure and the consolidation of governance in a metropolitan area. The major argument for a metropolitan reform is the thesis that a city’s economic and social growth should be accompanied by appropriate transformations in the institutional sphere (Lefèvre 1998). Therefore, the main goals of metropolitan reform are aligning administrative structures with functional relations and establishing strong institutions that cover the whole metropolitan area, i.e. a metropolitan government. To justify this in more detail, three arguments are usually used:

1. The effectiveness and efficiency argument
2. The social equity argument
3. The democratisation and social participation argument

First of all, administrative consolidation should bring a greater efficiency and effectiveness of public service provision by achieving economies of scale related to a larger number of residents and an extended area of operations. According to this approach, the existence of a large number of independent municipal units is an obstacle to increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the public service sector. Fragmentation leads to the doubling of administration, infrastructure and institutions, whilst the lack of coordination in local policies leads to the dispersion and waste of resources. All these problems can be avoided through management integration, which enables better allocation of the resources by public authorities. A larger jurisdiction area also provides for more comprehensive and coherent spatial planning which leads to the optimised locating of public investments and a more effective distribution of specific land-use zones.

Secondly, metropolitan reform is conducive to raising social equity in the metropolitan areas. Fragmentation isolates the poorer communities of the core city from the often affluent suburbs. The administrative consolidation of a metropolitan area makes it possible to achieve a common standard of public services. It limits fiscal and income-related inequalities between local governments. Moreover, it eliminates the problem of “free riding”, a situation in which the core cities bear the costs of maintaining the institutions and the infrastructure to the advantage of the suburban residents whose local taxes are used exclusively to sustain their municipalities (Hawley 1951; Neenan 1972; Green 1974). Administrative integration brings the

metropolitan area much closer to an “ideal” situation, in which the public services are provided with the use of taxes paid by all the people who actually avail of them.

Thirdly, there are political arguments in favour of metropolitan reform. According to the advocates of this concept, larger-scale local government structures are more democratic and open than smaller units. This is because they substantially eliminate the possibility of being dominated by small but influential interest groups, which could easily take control in smaller communes. The establishment of a government unit which is clearly and directly responsible for public affairs on a metropolitan scale makes the authorities more independent from local pressure groups. The consolidation of governance provides for more constructive solving of supra-local problems because it makes an appropriate spatial and institutional scale available to deal with them. This also increases the residents’ interest in metropolitan issues because they are finally aware of who is politically responsible for these issues and from whom they can demand specific action (Lyons and Lowery 1989).

Since the late 1950s and early 1960s, the public choice concept has been a competitive idea to the metropolitan reform (Tiebout 1956; Ostrom et al. 1961; Warren 1966; Bish 1971; Bish and Ostrom 1974). This approach decidedly rejects the idea of institutional consolidation in metropolitan areas and basically undermines all the major premises of metropolitan reform. This concept does, in fact, perceive administrative fragmentation as conducive to the effectiveness of public services, whilst any competition between local governments in this respect is, indeed, advantageous. The desired administrative structure of a metropolitan area consists of a large number of small local government units. The arguments used by the public choice theoreticians can be divided into two groups:

1. Economic and fiscal arguments
2. Social and political arguments

Arguments from the first group are based on the assumption that the metropolitan reform does not lead to a greater effectiveness of public services. On the contrary, it gives one institution a monopoly in the market, which does not favour innovation and cost reduction. In a situation of political and institutional fragmentation, when there are a large number of independent municipal units, a mechanism exists that is reminiscent of a market featured by a large number of manufacturers (local governments) who compete for consumers (the residents). Tiebout’s model (1956) assumes that local authorities with extensive financial autonomy can freely determine their tax/service package. Owing to municipal fragmentation, residents of a metropolitan area can freely choose an appropriate “package” for themselves. It is also possible for them to appraise the management effectiveness by “voting with their feet”, i.e. if they are dissatisfied with the quality of public services and the local governments’ policy in their current place of residence, they can move to better-managed units within the same metropolitan area (Tiebout 1956; Ostrom et al. 1961).

The public choice proponents do not deny that there are some public services that require a larger spatial scale than a small local unit. The appropriate instrument for their organisation is not, however, a top-down reform of the basic administrative division and the establishment of new “heavy” institutional forms (of

“metropolitan government” nature). The solution is the voluntary horizontal cooperation of the existing local government structures. Furthermore, the organisation and provision of public services, which are the responsibility of local authorities, can be easily separated from their actual “production” by entering into agreements with other actors, for example, with neighbouring local governments or private companies.

Social and political arguments are of equal significance in the public choice theory. A metropolitan government proposed by the advocates of the metropolitan reform is too remote from the ordinary citizens to give them effective political control over it. Real local democracy is only possible in small local units; hence, it is necessary to sustain their self-reliance and independence. A smaller community is capable of forcing a greater political responsibility on the authorities. This point of view emphasises the advantages of direct democracy and the importance of close contacts with local politicians (Parks and Oakerson 2000). Administrative fragmentation gives the residents of suburban communities a chance to separate themselves from the politics of the great cities where their interests could be lost among other problems or be outvoted. By holding a planning authority, the governments in the suburban zones can also indirectly determine the social and economic status of the prospective residents, for example, by determining the sizes of building plots, and exclude the undesirable forms of land usage (Pacione 2001).

Confronting both these classical models, i.e. metropolitan reform and public choice, is not an easy task, because both stem from fundamentally different values and principles (Lefèvre 1998). The core of the metropolitan reform concept is an integrated and global approach, the prevention of any form of social differentiation and segregation, as well as being guided by values such as solidarity and social equity. On the other hand, the public choice approach emphasises the advantages of individual freedom of choice and the proximity of local authorities and their direct responsibility to the residents, in addition to the free competition between local governments which should work to the advantage of improved management effectiveness.

What both approaches presented above have in common, despite their basic ideological differences, is the fact that they focused on analysing the functioning of traditionally perceived administration units – usually local governments. The essence of the dispute between their proponents was the possible need for introducing a new form of an integrated *metropolitan government*. More recent studies take into account the greater complexity of the modern models of governing metropolitan areas and the formation of their networking character involving a vast number of actors, including those which do not fit within the precise definition of the public administration sphere. To differentiate it from the traditional research perspectives, this new type of approach is often referred to as *metropolitan governance*.

In new economic conditions, the need to include metropolitan areas in the global economy has become more pressing. The central premise for the new wave of reforms is the belief that their implementation will improve a region’s position in the worldwide metropolitan network and that this will be advantageous to all

stakeholders within a metropolitan area (Swanstrom 2001). As a result, new important actors have emerged in the sphere of governing metropolitan areas. These include the institutions of the European Union, regional authorities, international corporations, nongovernment organisations and companies which provide public services which, until recently, were under public administration and excluded from market competition, for example, power and water supply, education, health care, transport and housing. In Europe, the gradual (or more radical as in the United Kingdom) withdrawal of central governments from many fields of social and economic life has led to a situation in which “instead of one pilot, a set of actors has emerged whose configuration and coordination is still forming” (Lefèvre 1998). This is also sometimes referred to as “multi-level multi-actor governance” (Marks 1993; Mitchell-Weaver et al. 2000; Hooghe and Marks 2001).

The changes in metropolitan management should be regarded as an element of a wider transformation process in the public sphere described as a transition from *government* to *governance* (Bailey 1993). The dominating feature of the government period was that of public administration dealing with the widest possible scope of public affairs, i.e. planning, building infrastructure, providing public services, etc. The government model was based on formal procedures and a vertical administrative hierarchy. In this context, governance means a transition from the vertical approach to a horizontal one (Barlow 1997) and from structures based on public authorities to a polycentric model featuring many actors. This also means that the boundaries between the public and private sectors are becoming indistinct and that the cooperation of administration with other actors is growing in significance. Moreover, some of the management techniques that were typically used in the private sector are now being taken over by public authorities to form the “new” public management. In the metropolitan governance system, the major actors are mutually dependent and complement one another. In order to achieve the potential that is necessary for effective operation, they establish policy networks in which the political legitimisation comes from public authorities chosen in general elections, whilst the financial and economic resources are mainly from the business sector (Jouve and Lefèvre 2002).

The achievements of the *metropolitan governance* concept so far are impressive. It has, primarily, expanded the scope of scientific interest in this field, placing greater emphasis on the role of key socio-administrative factors in contemporary public management, i.e. initiatives and structures based on agreements and collaboration, political leadership, incentives to cooperate from the central government, individual strategies of behaviour, ways in which decisions are made, the decision-makers’ responsibilities and the relationships between the public and private (non-government) sectors.

To recapitulate the modern scientific dispute, one must conclude that, despite the differences in evaluating different theoretical approaches, there is reasonable agreement that the vision of the “perfect” metropolitan reform has been lost in the transition from the government to the governance type of analysis. The identification of an indisputable “best practice” or the complete replication of specific institutional

experience seems impossible (Silva 2007). This leads to using a case study-type analysis, which takes into account the local and national contexts.

Public Governance in the Poznań Metropolitan Area: From Disintegration to Voluntary Cooperation

Poznań is the fifth largest city in Poland (556,022 residents) and the capital of the Wielkopolska Voivodeship (29,828 km²; approx. 3,403,174 residents), the core region of the early Polish state which was established in the tenth century. From the Second Partition of Poland in 1793 until the reunion of the Polish state in 1919, the Wielkopolska region was under Prussian rule but with a majority of Polish population. Resistance against the Prussian political domination stimulated the rise of a civil society and dynamic economic development in the region, which were especially significant in comparison to the other parts of Poland that were under Russian and Austrian rule. Today, in terms of economic performance, Poznań is the second richest city in Poland (after the capital city, Warsaw). It is also, together with its suburban zone, a very attractive investment site for many transnational companies, including Volkswagen, GlaxoSmithKline, Bridgestone, Nestlé, Beiersdorf, Imperial Tobacco, MAN, SABMiller, Wrigley and Allied Irish Bank. The Poznań International Fair is one of the largest exhibition centres in Eastern and Central Europe.

The city of Poznań has a city-powiat status (similar to the former county boroughs or the current unitary districts in England or *kreisfreie Städte, Stadtkreise*, in Germany). It is surrounded by the powiat of Poznań which includes 17 communes (Fig. 5.1) and is the largest land powiat (county, *Landkreis*) in Poland. Together, they form the most important urban region in the western part of Poland (Table 5.1).

The scale of change in the Poznań Metropolitan Area since 1990 has been tremendous and probably more remarkable than in many other cities in Western Europe. The most important spatial outcome of the political, economic and social transition is the rapid growth of the suburban area in terms of population and employment (Tables 5.2 and 5.3, Fig. 5.2). It coincides with a decline in the number of residents and jobs in the core city. After 1990, the re-emergence of bid rent, with land prices gradually declining as the distance from the city centre increases, has significantly changed the spatial structure of the Poznań Metropolitan Area. Although market principles often work in favour of the pre-1990 residential districts (due to the existing technical infrastructure), new single-family houses in the suburban area are much cheaper than flats of the same size in the core city. This residential suburbanisation has been enabled by the increasing rate of car ownership. But traffic congestion has emerged as another result. Public transport is not well developed, although the Poznań Fast Tramway was opened in the late 1990s. Under these conditions, some of the most accessible sites can be found in the outer parts of the city or in suburban locations, where the traffic congestion is lower and the road network is relatively modern. This mainly affects the distribution of services and results in



Fig. 5.1 Poznań Metropolitan Area: city of Poznań and powiat of Poznań (Source: author)

Table 5.1 Basic data on Poznań Metropolitan Area (2009)

Territorial unit	Number of municipalities	Population	Area (km ²)	Population density (population per km ²)
City of Poznań	1	556,022	261	2,130
Powiat of Poznań	17	315,159	1,900	166
Poznań Metropolitan Area	18	871,181	2,161	403

Source: own compilation based on data from the GUS (Central Statistical Office) website, <http://www.stat.gov.pl>

Table 5.2 Population change in Poznań metropolitan area between 1995 and 2009

Territorial unit	Population 1995	Population 2009	Change	Change in %
City of Poznań	581,772	556,022	-25,750	-4.4
Powiat of Poznań	239,352	315,159	+75,807	+31.7
Poznań Metropolitan Area	821,124	871,181	+50,057	+6.1

Source: own compilation based on data from the GUS (Central Statistical Office) website, <http://www.stat.gov.pl>

Table 5.3 Employment change in Poznań Metropolitan Area between 2000 and 2008

Territorial unit	Jobs 2000	Jobs 2007	Change	Change in %
City of Poznań	221,830	227,846	+6,016	+2.7
Powiat of Poznań	60,267	89,457	+29,190	+48.4
Poznań Metropolitan Area	282,097	317,303	+35,206	+12.5

Source: own compilation based on data from the GUS (Central Statistical Office) website, <http://www.stat.gov.pl>

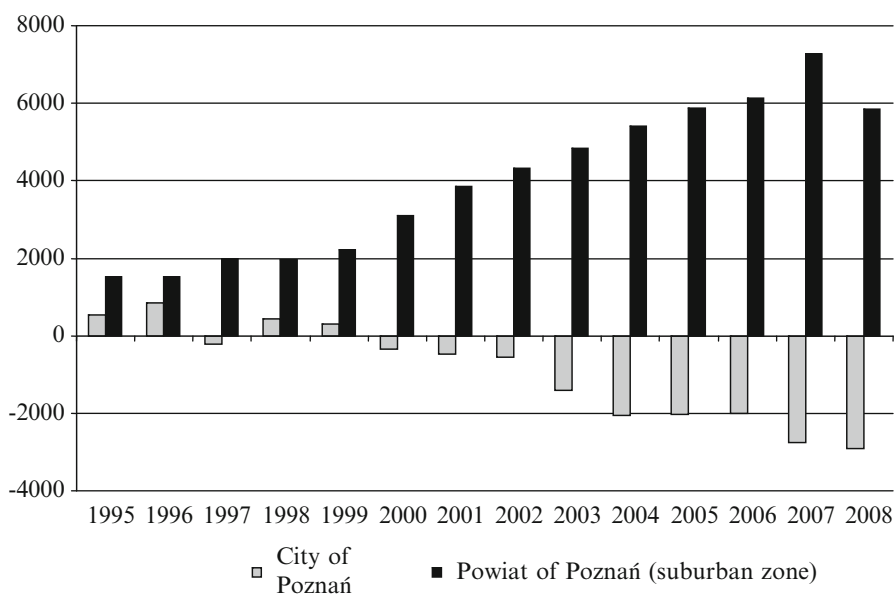


Fig. 5.2 Net migration in Poznań Metropolitan Area in 1995–2008 (Source: own work based on data from the GUS (Central Statistical Office) website, <http://www.stat.gov.pl>)

the construction of large out-of-the-city shopping centres. The lack of accessible and affordable greenfield sites within the core city has had an influence on the location of industry too. Most of the new industrial areas are situated in suburban communes (especially in the western part of the powiat of Poznań), and some enterprises that had been located in the city of Poznań also moved there. There is increasing inter-municipal competition to attract as many new residents and enterprises as possible. Some suburban communes (e.g. Tarnowo Podgórne, Suchy Las, Komorniki and Swarzędz) seem to be much more successful than the City of Poznań.

Institutional development in the Poznań Metropolitan Area has varied strongly over the past decades. After World War II, the issues of public governance in urban agglomerations were greatly affected by the general changes in the political system and the introduction of socialism. In 1950, local government and the dual system of public administration were dissolved and replaced with a uniform state power structure. The role of local government and local state administration was wholly taken over by “national councils” which were, in fact, state authority bodies. Territorial

administration units (voivodeships and communes) did not have any decision-making or financial freedom. There were no democratic rules for electing political representations at these levels, and the centralised system of governing the state restricted the competence of local units in many important fields.

A new stage in the development of the urban management model in Poland began with a major administration reform in 1990. The reform is generally considered as one of the greatest successes of the Polish political transformation. It has contributed to a significant change in the approach to managing public affairs, has empowered local communities and encouraged them to take up civic activity. However, because local governments were only reinstated at the commune level, the changes of the early 1990s meant to a great extent that the big cities lost their administrative connections with their nearest surroundings. Obviously, these connections had not been, until then, based on the principle of local democracy and autonomy (state enterprises operated in the field of municipal services and public transport). They did, nonetheless, ensure a certain minimum of effective public service in the urbanised areas. Moreover, the changes in the political system did not cause any remodelling of the administrative division at the commune level, which, in fact, remains the same as that proposed between 1972 and 1975 and at a deeper level continues the traditions of the Act of 1933. With all due respect for the achievements of the local government reform of 1990, one must point out that it has contributed considerably to today's problems with administrative fragmentation in metropolitan areas. These are, however, not so much the result of communal reform itself but rather of delays in the subsequent stages of changes in the form of the higher administration and higher administrative divisions of government and the lack of a comprehensive vision of the whole local government system after 1990.

After 1990, the best opportunity to overcome the problem of administrative fragmentation in metropolitan areas and to introduce new structures of integrated governance was the territorial and administration reform of 1998. Introducing new tiers of local and regional self-government (powiats and new, larger voivodeships) could provide a chance to adjust the administrative status of big cities and metropolitan areas. In the end, however, the reform did not provide for any major shift towards metropolitan integration. Re-establishing the city-powiat category, which was traditional in the Polish administration system, made the large cities even more administratively isolated from their suburban areas. Furthermore, the concept of metropolitan areas as regional units was not approved by the authors of the reform. After the dissolution of the former small voivodeships and their inclusion in the larger regions, metropolitan areas were subject to administrative disintegration. The only links which have survived are the voluntary collaboration of communes and the cooperation of land powiats and city powiats. The three statutory forms of such a collaboration are joint boards, agreements and associations and more businesslike cooperation (joint-stock or limited liability companies).

So far, in the case of the Poznań Metropolitan Area, joint boards have had very limited significance. Out of the 233 such units in Poland, only five include communes from the Poznań Metropolitan Area. The relatively small role of this form of integration is due to the following features:

- The small number of actively functioning joint boards
- The limited scope of collaboration (only one or two issues)
- The small spatial range

The latter factor is especially significant. The existing joint boards usually include only some of the communes from the metropolitan area, and the city of Poznań is not a member of any of them. Similar problems, resulting to a great extent from the differences in size between the core city and the smaller suburban communes, are also an obstacle in this type of collaboration in many other metropolitan areas in Europe (see Kaczmarek 2005; Kaczmarek and Mikula 2007b).

A municipal agreement between the city of Poznań and nine neighbouring communes plays a major role in the management of water supply and sewage disposal in the metropolitan area. It is executively operated by Aquanet – a registered company in which the city of Poznań holds the majority of shares. The municipal collaboration in this field dates, in principle, to the very beginning of the restored local government. In 1991, the hitherto state-owned water supply and sewage disposal company was divided. To continue its functioning, it was necessary for the communes it served to make an agreement and determine the conditions of taking over and administering the assets. The agreement specified the establishment of a limited company and the takeover of shares by the stakeholders of the agreement. This enabled the municipalisation of the assets administered by the state-owned company (1996). Aquanet is controlled by local government units; however, as a company subject to commercial law, it enjoys a certain degree of decision-making autonomy. Consequently, it is becoming one of the major actors in managing the development of the metropolitan area. Despite an analogous initial situation, a similar process was not implemented in the field of heat engineering. During the municipalisation of assets administered by the former state-owned heating provider, it was agreed that the particular towns and communes would take over exclusive ownership of these assets within their administrative limits.

So far, municipal agreement has been the most important instrument in providing integrated management in the Poznań Metropolitan Area; it is also used in fields other than water supply and sewage disposal. Inter-municipal agreements made between Poznań and the surrounding communes concern, for example, preschool education and day care in nurseries. During the past 3 years, a series of agreements was also made in the field of public transport. Within such an agreement, a suburban commune entrusts the city of Poznań to provide public transport services on a specified route. The city of Poznań delivers this service through its municipal unit – the City Transport Board. An agreement like this makes it possible to include the suburban lines it manages to the public transport system in Poznań and enables passengers to use a single ticket on their route to and from Poznań, as well as within the city.

The examples of municipal agreements at the commune level listed above aim to expand the territorial range of public services provided by the city of Poznań to neighbouring communes. Similar agreements are also made at the powiat level, mainly in the field of social services. Usually, the powiat of Poznań assigns to the

city of Poznań public services delivered by specialist units, for example, adoption and child protection centres, as well as psychology and educational centres for children with special learning needs, which employ highly qualified staff. The number of children with such needs living within the land powiat is relatively small and establishing separate centres for them would be inexpedient.

Slightly different agreements are made in such areas as the employment market, business support, fire defence and emergency medical services. These concern the functioning of institutions that are clearly of a metropolitan character and whose operations cover both the city of Poznań and the powiat of Poznań. Taking into account the nature of the local employment market, it was considered reasonable to conduct a joint employment policy for both powiats. All the work in this field has been assigned to one employment centre which provides services to the whole metropolitan area.

Of major significance in the field of public security is the fact that the operations of the police and fire service units cover both the city of Poznań and the whole powiat of Poznań. Such territorial administrative organisation in these sectors is primarily the result of the regulations which introduced the territorial and administrative reform of 1998. It should be noted that the sphere of public security comes only partially within the scope of competence of local governments.

An interesting example of the wider metropolitan integration is the Poznań Local Tourism Organisation (PLOT), founded as an association in 2003. Among its members are the city of Poznań, the powiat of Poznań and ten communes from the metropolitan area. PLOT's statutory goal is to support the growth of the tourism market in Poznań and the Poznań Agglomeration, in addition to promoting them as attractive tourist sites. An important element of PLOT's operations is combining the public and private sectors. Apart from local government units, it also embraces tourism business chambers, cultural institutions, companies from the tourism sector (e.g. hotels) and actors that are of key importance to the local tourism market (e.g. the Poznań International Fair and the Poznań-Ławica Airport).

To date, areas of great importance to the development and functioning of a metropolitan area such as strategic programming, spatial planning and road infrastructure management have not been included in any form of institutional coordination. Hence, the signing, on 15 May 2007, of the agreement of cooperation between the local governments of the Poznań Agglomeration was a major step towards the stronger institutionalisation of the metropolitan area. The stakeholders included the city of Poznań, the powiat of Poznań and 17 suburban communes. They instituted the Agglomeration Council as a Permanent Conference of the Mayors of the Poznań Agglomeration. Initially, the Council, under a non-statutory institutional arrangement, was to act as a forum to exchange information between local governments and to determine the fields of cooperation which, in the future, could take on specific legal forms. However, as of April 2010, work on appointing inter-municipal joint boards had not been completed in some key areas within the metropolitan area, i.e. in waste management and public transport.

More promising than the results in establishing inter-municipal partnerships are the prospects for cooperation in creating the Metropolitan Area Development

Strategy. The members of the Agglomeration Council unanimously supported the idea of preparing such a document and assigned this task to a consortium of four universities in Poznań. The first stage of work consisted of some comprehensive diagnostic studies. An important aspect of this collaboration is the fact that an initiative undertaken with the Poznań Agglomeration Council, a non-formal body, resulted in operations within specific legal forms pertaining to fixing local government support for the project in proportion to their population. The powiat of Poznań provided financial assistance in the form of a special purpose grant for the city of Poznań, which performs the function of the Agglomeration Council's representative in their legal dealings with the academic consortium preparing the metropolitan strategy.

There is a great potential for further collaboration. So far, there is still no business and marketing public agency to develop and promote an integrated investment proposal and to provide a service for investors within the whole metropolitan area. A crucial factor which could strengthen the metropolitan consolidation in the Poznań area is the organisation in Poznań of mass events, for example, EURO 2012 and the cities competing for the title of the European Capital of Culture 2016. Organising such events requires strong collaboration between the city of Poznań and neighbouring local governments.

Western Theories in Post-socialist Reality: Opportunities and Limitations

The above empirical analysis of governance-related problems in the Poznań Metropolitan Area gives an opportunity to attempt to answer the question: how could Western theoretical concepts be applied in the conditions of a post-socialist country? The issue will be presented in relation to the three theoretical approaches presented in the first part of this paper:

1. The metropolitan reform concept
2. The public choice concept
3. The metropolitan governance concept

The main thesis of the metropolitan reform concept is the need to adapt the territorial and administrative structure of metropolitan areas to the expanding range of the big city's direct functional influence. Demographic and economic processes should, therefore, be accompanied by concurrent transformations in the institutional sphere. The dynamic population and economic growth of the suburban zone in the Poznań Metropolitan Area have been in recent decades very significant. In the functional sense, the city of Poznań has, indeed, already exceeded its administrative limits which have not changed since 1987.

The metropolitan reform concept was not put to practice during the general reconstruction of the country's territorial and administrative structure in 1998 at the powiat or voivodeship level. During the past several years, the significance of the

metropolitan concept has been increasing in the subsequent drafts of legal acts aimed at formalising administrative structures on the metropolitan scale. But the final shape of the proposed solutions concerning the form of government has not been determined.

In Poland, a limitation to the usefulness of the metropolitan reform idea is the lack of some of the major challenges and problems that inspired the classical model. There is no ethnic (race) segregation in metropolitan areas (a problem that hardly exists in Poland or in Poznań), and there is a lack of strong fiscal imbalance between the poor core city and the affluent suburbs. Within the Poznań Metropolitan Area, the core city still has a relatively high budget revenue. This is not affected by the fact that some of the wealthier suburban communes have higher funds per capita in comparison to Poznań. There is, however, one considerable problem that is in the focus of the metropolitan reform proponents – the lack of integrated spatial planning on the metropolitan scale in the context of strong suburbanisation. The weak national regulations for metropolitan planning currently in force prevent any effective operations in this respect (Kaczmarek and Mikula 2007a).

To date, the metropolitan reform idea has not been implemented in any way in Poland. But this does not automatically mean that the current model of governing metropolitan areas is related to the alternative concept of public choice. The restricted financial autonomy of communes and their lack of full freedom in determining tax rates make it very difficult to conduct a conscious policy of creating tax/service packages. The legally permitted property tax maximum rates are restricted to a low level, and local governments have no influence on the rates of personal and corporate income taxes – their main source of revenue. In Poland, there are also extensive mechanisms at the national level for equalising local government incomes at the national level (general subventions, including compensatory shares and special purpose grants) which, to some extent, moderate the differences in the affluence of the particular local units.

Another premise of the public choice concept is the competition between local governments within metropolitan areas. This is often perceived as an advantage. This type of competition, however, should include relatively equal actors, whereas within the Poznań Metropolitan Area the demographic supremacy of the core city over the suburban communes is still very obvious despite current suburbanisation trends. Furthermore, the relatively low mobility of the Polish people, in comparison to the residents of the United States, does not allow them to fully avail themselves of all the positive aspects of administrative fragmentation in metropolitan areas proposed by the public choice theory – for example, being able to freely choose the best commune to settle in.

The one field in which Polish communes have actual decision-making freedom is spatial policy, especially given the very weak planning tools at the metropolitan and regional levels. Nevertheless, the competition to win new residents and investors has resulted in the lack of planning coordination between neighbouring units, which is often characterised by the German term *Inselplanung* (island planning). This leads to unfavourable spatial effects (urban sprawl) in Polish metropolitan areas.

The political dimension of the public choice concept seems to be more relevant in Poland than the economic and fiscal factors. Local democracy and citizen participation in smaller municipalities seem to be very strong. Public opinion surveys and interviews with local politicians have confirmed that there is more direct contact between residents and mayors or councillors in smaller municipalities than in big cities (Mikuła 2010). This view is also supported by some of the experts who are involved in the development of a metropolitan bill (Kulesza 2006).

It is interesting to relate some of the elements of the *metropolitan governance* concept to Polish reality. These include the recognition of multiple actors involved in the governance of a metropolitan area; voluntary and flexible collaboration; the lack of hierarchic connections; the blurring of boundaries between the public, private and nongovernment sectors; and the establishment of more formalised metropolitan institutions from bottom-up initiatives. Despite the changes that are taking place in the public governance system in metropolitan areas, it seems that local authorities continue to play a fundamental role in the system, especially at the commune level. The integration of non-administration actors, for example, business and academic institutions, non-profit organisations and the media, into the governance model is still difficult in Poland, although there are examples showing that such attempts are being made. These are, of course, non-authority activities, like the organisation of the Poznań Agglomeration Economic Forum by the Wielkopolska Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WIPH) or support for metropolitan initiatives by the local and regional media. Activities also include collaboration among regional and local tourism organisations (Mikuła 2008). The role of scientific circles is clearly apparent in the formulation of a development strategy for the Poznań Agglomeration Council.

The institutionalised involvement of private investors in metropolitan area development poses an important dilemma. Some of these investors' operations on the local scale are controversial among the public. In some cases, private entrepreneurs can force local authorities to create specific policies which are advantageous to them in spatial planning (especially relating to site development conditions which are based on the principle of the so-called good neighbourhood) or with regard to real estate (obtaining attractive sites below their market value). Hence, some specific threats may emerge if metropolitan governance is strongly intertwined with the business environment. Furthermore, commercialised and privatised municipal companies are becoming relatively autonomous self-governing units and are becoming quite independent of the local authorities, in addition to gaining a capacity to determine the growth of the metropolitan area.

The *metropolitan governance* concept proposes a management model based mainly on the voluntary and flexible collaboration of numerous actors. It does, however, provide for the establishment of more formalised institutional forms but emphasises that this should primarily result from bottom-up initiatives. The latest drafts of the Metropolitan Act proposed by the central government lean towards such a solution, based mainly on "institutionalising" metropolitan areas. As far as the Poznań Metropolitan Area is concerned, there is a clear political will to ensure such a legal fixation for local governments' collaboration in the metropolitan area.

To conclude, as has been pointed out using the example of the Poznań Metropolitan Area, the experience of governing metropolitan areas in a post-socialist country is much shorter than in Western states. This is primarily due to historical conditions and the socialist heritage of centralisation. The transformations of the 1980s and 1990s in Western Europe led to a gradual withdrawal of the *welfare state* and the strengthening of the position of local governments and other important actors in metropolitan governance. Concurrently in Poland, in 1990, an almost instant democratic breakthrough in the political system resulted in, among other issues, embracing the ideals of local governments and the autonomy of communes. The model of public governance in metropolitan areas has been evolving towards one of public choice, despite being limited by central government control which continues to be strong. The country's socioeconomic development and advancing suburbanisation have created problems which can only be resolved on a metropolitan scale. The position of local governments in Poland is strong enough to make any radical metropolitan reform socially and politically unlikely. At present, the only feasible solution appears to be the intensification of voluntary collaboration stimulated, perhaps, by small legislative changes at the national level. Nevertheless, as compared to the situation observed 20 years ago, the general trend towards fragmentation has reversed. After a period in which local governments have gained and secured their independence, now we are facing a stage of integration.

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