

METROPOLIZATION AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL FOR FIGHTING THE RECESSION AND OVERCOMING EFFECTS OF THE CRISIS

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Abstract

Instability is one of the fundamental characteristics of the global economy characterized by unprecedented growth of overlapping processes. One of the effective tools for adapting to the logic of the global system is to support metropolization processes, which on the one hand take place spontaneously, but on the other may also be inspired and modelled to some extent. The consequence of this kind of action may be the emergence of a learning metropolitan area. It is a source of permanent and internal development that due to the flexibility of the metropolitan cooperation network is able to quickly respond and adapt to the perturbations that arise.

Key words: Metropolization, metropolitan areas, economic development, crisis, globalization.

1. Introduction

A sense of a lack of stability of economic systems, which translates into an increase in generally perceived uncertainty, is inherent in existence of a man of the early 21st century. In this sense, the dream of stability, which was to come as a result of the ongoing process of social modernization, did not come true. Paradoxically, it turned out that it was the rapid progress of technology, new solutions regarding organization, transport and communication that had become the primary generator of Schumpeterian processes of *creative destruction* that are going ceaselessly (Schumpeter 2009). This phenomenon is related to the interdependence of global social, economic

and political phenomena, which appears on the unprecedented scale. The world is becoming one place, and time and space lose dimension when they are no longer a major obstacle in maintaining the relationship between partners from the most remote corners of the globe, as if they were in adjacent offices. On the one hand, it gives a tremendous opportunity to transfer knowledge, capital and to allocate them in places ensuring the highest rate of return, but at the same time it generates a lot of problems associated with fast capital flows, which do not reflect the macroeconomic situation and which significantly destabilize the real manufacturing processes. Multiplication and intensification of flows and interactions in unprecedented subjective and objective configurations on a global scale limits controllability of the entire system, the effects of which are the result of the deliberate strategic actions to a slight extent and increasingly, the result of aggregation, thus overlapping of a large number of individual actions those interactions. Their interaction results in unexpected side effects and contemporary economic crises are the flagship example.

2. Defensive strategies in the age of the lost order and the emerging new anti-order

In the view of contemporary reality presented in the introduction, instability can lead to feelings of confusion, when we relate it to the Westphalian Order, dominating for a significant part of the 20th century. In this order, the states as independent, strong beings were the primary catalyst in the internal relations, and above all, in international economic and political relations. A place of the lost order has been taken over by a new *anti-order*, which is the result of a complex network of relationships and interactions between multiple and extremely diverse players of the global *metagame* (Beck 2005: 23). It is not chaos, but the contradiction with the previous order, whose new rules (*metaregulations*) are waiting to see the light of day. We are now at a stage when we are just trying to describe and explore what appears to us as a disorder or we are trying to shy away from it, claiming that this is only a transitional stage, a time *between ages*,¹ after which the order, which we are accustomed to, returns. At this moment it is difficult to point out evidence that might support such a scenario. The instability and vulnerability of modern society to crises is the result of a new logic of the social system, which has become global, and it brings about unexpected results through aggregation processes. For this reason, Ulrich Beck

¹ This term is used by Edward Wnuk-Lipiński in his book: Świat międzyepoki: globalizacja, demokracja, państwo narodowe. Instytut Studiów Politycznych PAN, Warszawa, 2004.

calls this society a society of risk, whose main source is no longer natural disaster or nature, but society itself through the processes taking place in it (Beck 2004). Dynamics and continuous processes of creative destruction mean that the instability is one of the fundamental characteristics of the modern *self-creating* society, and the basic question is not when the crises will cease, but when we will be able to adapt to them as *sui generis* characteristics of modern society. Another feature of this new emerging reality is, what Jadwiga Staniszkis calls, *asymmetry of rationality*. In this way she highlights that the dominant logic in the global scale is market rationality, which spreads over the spheres which have been relatively independent so far, including the sphere of the state, politics and democracy (Staniszkis 2003: 19).

Different strategies may be adopted in response to the new reality of the global turbo-capitalism. Some people, like James Goldsmith believe that efforts should be made to stop the processes of globalization, which make the global market “a global casino”, by returning to the regional free trade areas only within countries with a similar level of development (Goldsmith 1995). However, solutions of this kind seem to be difficult to implement in practice, and their effectiveness may be doubtful. A strategy of refusing to accept the global flows and exchange is in fact condemning own country to marginalization and finding oneself on the sidelines of modernization processes. When this policy is further linked with an authoritarian or even totalitarian regime of power, it often results in poverty of a substantial part of the society, and even in the waves of hunger, which can be exemplified by North Korea. Openness seems to be a more effective attitude because a global network of exchanges is a huge potential, however, it is necessary to have proper preparation to use it. This preparation means such a kind of self-organization and self-awareness that will ensure the greatest possible degree of flexibility and resilience to external shocks.

Laying the foundations for competitiveness on a global scale requires a post-Fordian paradigm of development, which says that it is impossible to generate growth already from the level of the standardized central state policy, in a situation where wealth and new values are created in the favourable local and regional areas, which are most often large urban areas. Accumulations of actors and capitals which appear there, as well as structural and communication relationships that occur between them thanks to their spatial proximity are the best guarantee of creating new values, innovation and technological solutions. In order to create a flexible economy, resilient to the volatility, of the global market, it is necessary for the state to adopt a development paradigm and to put an emphasis on creating the most favourable conditions for the metropolization of the area. Metropolises and

metropolitan areas are currently a point of the most dynamic growth, which is the driving force of national economies. This is due to the accumulation of capital and competences in their area, and their spatial proximity and interaction, as well as synaptic connections with other metropolitan centers in the region, the country or the world ensure the development of higher functions in the political, cultural, financial and economic dimension. At the same time, a large number of possible configurations of metropolitan networks of cooperation and exchange make them extremely resistant to the global market situation, developing dynamically, and therefore they are characterized by high resilience and flexibility – urban resilience (Simmie and Martin 2010). Flexibility of metropolitan areas means resistance to external shocks and the ability to return to the pre-crisis growth path quickly, or to adopt a new strategy of development by reconfiguring the cooperation network and engaging new capital (Pyka, Trembaczewski). Obviously, not every agglomeration or conurbation will turn into a metropolitan area or a metropolis, which results from the diversity of abilities to engage endogenous potential, the level of confidence of local actors and the tendency to cooperate, which ensures the emergence of dynamic network relationships. Therefore, now so much emphasis is put on creating favorable formal and institutional conditions, which would facilitate such relationships, leading to the creation of “a learning metropolitan area”. The latter can be understood as the result of a synergistic cooperation and exchanges taking place between actors operating in the metropolitan area, capable of self-reflection on their own action and designing cooperation networks optimal for themselves (Pyka 2012). The emergence of “the learning metropolitan area”, a highly dynamic structure, able to respond quickly to changing trends and each time to reconstruct internal links seems to be an effective tool for fighting the recession and global crisis.

3. Metropolization, or how to control the uncontrollable

A phenomenon of metropolization is a set of processes that cannot be fully controlled, and possibilities to control them are always limited. This is due to the fact that metropolization means in fact transferring the logic of a global “metagame” to the local level, which is materialized in the metropolitan area by numerous and diverse actors, whose cooperation, competition and general interdependence is on the one hand a source of extraordinary growth dynamics, on the other hand, it determines the limited controllability of the specific local system, which can maintain stronger links with other metropolitan centers than with their immediate regional environment.

Metropolization is, therefore, a largely spontaneous process, which is the effect of the worldwide competitive game, global capitalism and aggregation of global processes, which determine the selection of specific locations that will become the sphere affected by metropolization.

However, this does not mean total helplessness of public authority with respect to the phenomena described above. The modern state and, increasingly, local authorities themselves, at various levels, do not cease to make an effort so that the most competitive and dynamic growth centers, i.e. the metropolitan areas and above all metropolises, are established in their area. While such actions do not guarantee effectiveness, they certainly can support metropolization process and aim to eliminate its side-effects, which may weaken growth around the area (Pyka 2013). These are the strategies that will increase a degree to which the potential is used, offered by metropolization through the concentration of resources, relationships and functions, through initiatives aimed to increase the level of confidence of actors from the metropolitan area and building structural and communication relationships between them, which limit the number of clashes of the individual strategies cancelling each other in order to achieve synergy between them. Another group of actions involves opening the decision-making processes to the participation of non-government actors, taking part in developing the metropolitan area and representing the private sector or community organizations, which leads to developing a specific metropolitan system of “co-governing” (governance) (Pyka 2011). This is also about the creation of the infrastructural and organizational database that enables dynamic flows in metropolitan area and thus prevents congestion. In practice, this means a properly developed system of transport and road infrastructure, but also modern information highways, coordinated spatial management and consistent external communication, being part of the widely understood territorial and investment marketing.

The awareness of the importance of metropolitan areas in creating growth and competition dynamics and in establishing growth centers affecting their environment, persuades policy makers to build institutional structures designed to support and model metropolization processes. The process of “creating a metropolis”, which we hear about, usually means in this case establishing institutional structures aimed to manage the metropolitan area. It is, therefore, a voluntaristic and institutional process, which aims to facilitate the development of metropolization in its original meaning, as a spontaneous process, resulting from an impact of globalization at the local level.

The institutional approach to the process of metropolisation outlined above is reflected in the policy of the most developed Western countries, and it is starting to spread to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. This process will be illustrated by the example of France and Poland by identifying the nature and sources of their policy regarding metropolitan areas.

A specific character of the situation in France in the context of the discussed issue is mainly due to the very significant position of the state as an institution, which since the French Revolution has been a fundamental factor integrating and organizing the French society, which is also related to a specific, because political and voluntary, concept of the French nation. French centralism, being a part of the Jacobin tradition, was reflected in a kind of suspicion of any competition against Republican central government and having a monopoly in defining common interest. Although centralism of the French state should be rendered relatively, owing to the fact that central government is deeply penetrated by local councilors at various levels, which is related to the common practice of combining representative seats, almost until the early 1980s, and owing to decentralization reforms, the French state played a leading role in shaping the political and economic processes. This translated into a lack of developed large urban centers outside of Paris, which contributed to defining a term *le désert français* (a French desert) (Gravier 1958), referring to the territory of the French province. Even in 1946, more than 50% of the French population was the population in rural areas (Belliot 2011: 23). The awareness of the weakness of the urban tissue in the French conditions, which the representatives of the Republican clerical body, modernized after the World War II, had led to the emergence of the idea of creating a “metropolis of balance,, (fr. *metropoles d’équilibres*). A goal of these centers was, first of all, to relieve the French capital and become the points of dynamic development outside the centre. In this way, in 1966, the first Urban Communities (*Communautés urbaines*) were established in Bordeaux, Lyon, Lille and Strasbourg, which over the years were joined by other urban centers (Pyka 2010:137). Urban communities operate today as public units of inter-municipal cooperation, and municipalities constituting them contribute a number of competencies essential for the activity of the metropolitan area. After some time, the Urban Communities were expected to turn into fully-fledged local government units, significantly changing the territorial organization of the state in urban areas, which in fact never happened.

By the end of the 1990s, no significant changes had been made to the tools for managing metropolitan areas. At the same time, a general decline in the economic growth since the mid 1970s, a crisis of the French model of the socially oriented state, and the failure of initiatives aimed at the

top-down economic recovery resulted in the situation that the inappropriateness of the territorial structure of the French state, including the phenomenon of exceptionally small municipalities, compared to the economic global challenges and metropolization processes, became acutely felt. In this context, the reform called the Chevènement reform after the name of its author, carried out in 1999, was of significant importance as it caused a massive integration of local governments in metropolitan areas, also the ones of a medium size, which could create the Communities of Agglomeration (Communautés d'agglomérations). The underlying cause of the success of the Chevènement Act was financial incentives, which the state offered to the municipalities that decided to cooperate voluntarily and the freedom of integration and the freedom to determine the territorial scope of inter-municipal cooperation units at the local level (Kerrouche 2008: 53).

The solutions contained in the said Act of 1999 enabled many of the French agglomerations to achieve critical mass in terms of demography and finance, and such a level of integration that enabled the implementation of projects of metropolitan importance, so that these areas could enter the international arena by finding new paths of development and dynamic growth due to metropolization processes. A good example of such a trajectory is the situation of the Community of Agglomeration, Saint-Etienne Métropole, created in 2000. Saint-Etienne city, which used to be a strong industrial center in the late 1990s, suffered economic collapse following the winding-up of industrial plants and migration of people. The establishment of the Community of Agglomeration around Saint-Etienne, embracing dozens of municipalities, allowed this city and its agglomeration to find a source of new growth and development in their endogenous resources, and *design* became its important element, i.e. industrial design that combined the city's past with its future (Pyka 2010: 139). Saint-Etienne agglomeration metamorphosis became materialized by the International Biennial of Design organized in this city, which made this city famous worldwide, thanks to which it became a member of a prestigious group of UNESCO creative cities.

Although the Chevenemet Act has given strong institutional bases to the development of French agglomerations, some of which could enter the way of dynamic metropolisation, it has not got rid of the French nation's territorial structure dualism. Although the financial potential of the inter-municipal units that manage the metropolitan territories and whose competences have been enlarged has increased, they still have not been given the status of the local government units what makes that, in fact, they constitute structures dependent on the municipal level, additionally struggling against the serious problem of their governing bodies democratic deficit. The problem of these units insufficient territorial scope in respect of the territory,

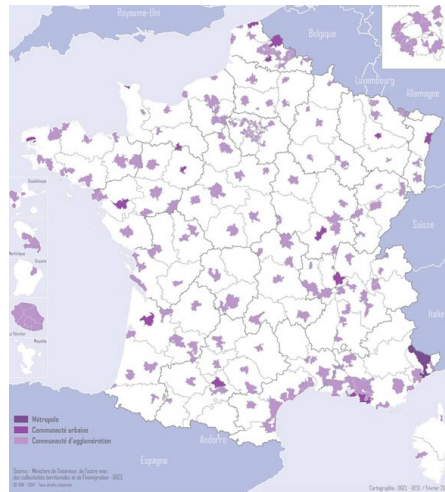
where the functional phenomena and metropolisation processes really take place, has been more often raised and discussed.

The described above situation in France was to be changed by the prepared by the end of the first decade of 21st century the wide territorial reform that, in its authors' idea, had to make the metropolitan territories and coming into being metropolises the main driving force of the French economy. The reform was to give the territories than adequate position in the local government structures and equip them with the appropriate legal and financial instruments. Although the Act on the territorial reform, finally passed on 16 December 2010, partially realized the written above objectives, it certainly has been a part of than wider policy of searching the sources of economic recovery and tools of the crisis fighting necessary in metropolitan territories objectification. Under the Act of 16 December 2010, French agglomerations of the population of about 500 000 citizens have gained the possibility of transformations to "Metropolises" (*Métropoles*), which have become the new type of public inter-municipal cooperation entities possessing broad competences to the functioning until then municipal and agglomeration communities. Additionally, the institutionalized "Metropolises" have directly taken over a part of de-parliamentary and regional competences with particular reference to problems that deal with the economic development, including the management of economic activity zones as well as with the territory of foreign promotion and its economic potential. Although despite the announcements, the "Metropolises" have not become the full-fledged self-government units, they seem to be a useful competition tool in the global market. Partially it has been able to solve the problem of a democratic deficit of those units' authority structures because the elections of councilors to the deliberation body of the "Metropolises" have been conjugated with the universal and direct elections to the municipal councils.

The crucial challenge before the reform of 2010 was the problem of the territory scope of the institutions managing the metropolitan territories that very rarely included areas of metropolization processes and that were often limited to the core of the metropolitan territory. Agglomeration and municipal communities were not able, in their territorial and formal construction, to take into consideration the network connections among relatively close metropolitan territories that create the so called network metropolises. In response to this situation, the authors of the Act of the end of 2010 additionally introduced the possibility to create the Metropolitan Poles (*Pôles métropolitains*), that are easy, based on voluntary cooperation structures with the existing neighboring municipal and agglomeration communities and with other inter-municipal units that pay taxes. The demographic criterion adopted for the Metropolitan Poles defines the minimum limit on the

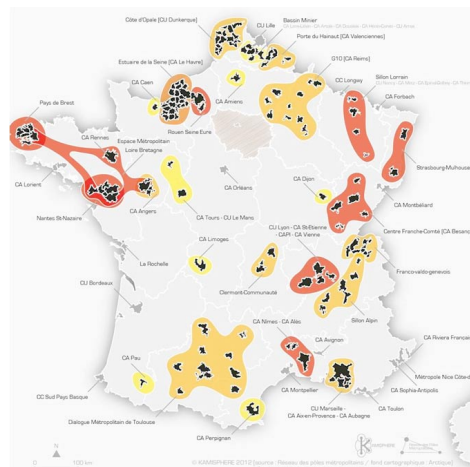
level of 300 000 citizens, but at least one of the component units must count more than 150 000 citizens².

Figure 1. Metropolises, municipal and agglomeration communities in France. Situation on 1 January 2013.



Source: Association of French Communities (Assemblée des Communautés de France), www.adcf.org (accessed 4 April 2013).

Figure 2. Metropolitan Poles in France. Situation on 1 January 2013.



Source: Network of Metropolitan Poles (Réseau des Pôles Métropolitains), <http://poles-metropolitains.fr> (accessed 4 April 2013).

² These problems are regulated by the article 8 of Act on the territorial reform: *Réforme des collectivités territoriales*. LOI n° 2010-1563. 16 décembre 2010.

Now it is difficult to assess the results of new institutional solutions adopted in France that aim at objectification and improvement of French metropolitan territories competitiveness. It requires the monitoring of metropolitan areas economic indicators in the perspective of at least five coming years because at present these areas are being constituted. By 1 January 2013, 15 municipal communities had been functioning including one metropolis and 213 agglomeration communities in France³. At the same time the crystallizing process of 14 Metropolitan Poles, that part of which has been formalized and a part is being in the registration process, lasts⁴.

Proceeding now to a description of the situation in Poland in the context of initiating the endogen potential of metropolitan areas and equipping them with adequate institutional managing tools, it should be stated that the Polish achievements in this matter are very poor comparing them with the ones in the Western Europe countries, including France. It is, of course, connected with the Polish post war history that was marked by the state centralism – “people’s democracy”. The first years of the transformation, at the beginning of the 90’s in Poland were connected, in the natural way, with the priority of reconstructing the local government autonomy and adapt the state’s territorial structure to the possible integration with European Communities. From this perspective, first of all, the reform on the municipal government of 1990, the territorial reform constituting 16 provinces and the lack of references in these documents to the problems of metropolisation as well as metropolitan areas functioning should be interpreted.

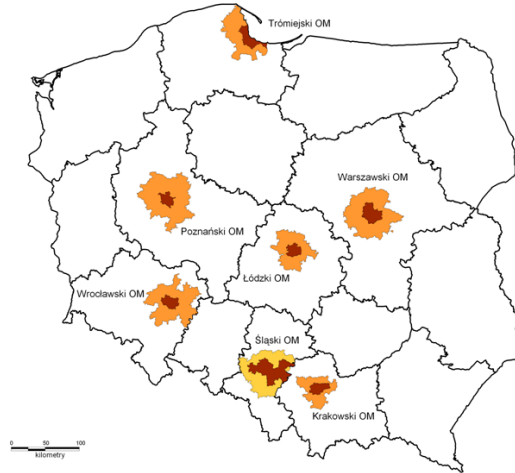
The problem of Polish territory metropolisation penetrated into the planning documents at the beginning of 21st century and in the first half of the decade of the new millennium it coincided with the appearance of the first projects of the “metropolitan act” and the foundation of Górnośląski Związk Metropolitalny – Upper Silesia Metropolitan Association in 2007. The term “the metropolitan act” refers to the regulation that aims at equipping the metropolitan areas or big agglomerations with institutional structures administering competences and authority in the scope of crucial problems for a municipal area integrated functioning. In the period from 2006 to 2010 at least two projects of legal acts, one of which was close in its solutions to those applied in France predicting some levels of inter-municipal cooperation that depended on the size of the municipal center but the obligatory structure had to have an application exclusively in accordance with the municipal areas of more than two million citizens. As a result

³ Elaboration is available on the webpage Association of French Communities (Assemblée des Communautés de France). www.adcf.org (accessed 4 April 2013).

⁴ Information comes from the webpage Network of Metropolitan Poles (Réseau des Pôles Métropolitains). <http://poles-metropolitains.fr> (accessed 4 April 2013).

of the lack of consent among the political elites as well as the local government environments, none of these projects was finally adopted.

Figure 3. Polish metropolitan areas in the country spatial arrangement.



Source: Smętkowski et al. 2008: 73.

After failures in works on the Polish regulation referring to the metropolitan areas management, the idea of preparing the act referring exclusively to the Upper Silesia Conurbation appeared in the environment of deputies and Euro-deputies of Platforma Obywatelska in the Silesia Province in 2010 (Kerger 2010). They had been preparing for a long time the bill that became than element of the Platforma Obywatelska election campaign in Silesia before the parliamentary elections in October 2011 provided the creation of Upper Silesia Metropolitan District. Still in September 2011 the leader of Silesian Platforma Obywatelska Tomasz Tomczykiewicz declared that if his political party would have won the majority in the election, the new metropolitan act had been adopted in 100 days (Zasada 2012a). The bill on the Katowice Metropolitan District implied the establishment of a specific type of a district that would constitute a local government community and operate following the example of other local government units in Poland. The metropolitan district, according to the authors' project, was, among others, to be responsible for tasks in the scope of creating common development strategy, spatial planning, public transport, road management, creating and management of units that were more important than usual communities, international cooperation and the metropolitan district promotion. The authorities in this special local government unit were to be chosen by means of

general elections. The district council as the resolution - passing body consisting of 9 councilors, chosen for a four-year term of office, the executive body as the district Management consisting of the District Administrator and two District Administrator Deputies and the Audit Committee being responsible for the control and supervision were the basic metropolitan district bodies.

Although the bill on the metropolitan district suggested by Silesian activists of Platforma Obywatelska could raise certain doubts – which determined its failure, there was not a broad debate in this matter (Zasada 2011). In result, the Upper Silesia Metropolitan Association rejected the bill revealing the crucial discrepancies in the scope of agglomeration particular cities' opinions. The Minister of Administration and Digitization Michał Boni, who soon after declared that the metropolitan act for the Silesian conurbation would not exist, predicted the future of the Act (Zasada 2012b). The Minister declared to re-open the debate on the future of Polish agglomerations, the stage of which was the publication of the Green Book of Metropolitan Areas⁵. Having conducted public consultations at the beginning of 2013, the Ministry of Administration and Digitization published their results in the form of the White Book of Metropolitan Areas. To the surprise of many people, the Book content opposed the ideas of adopting the metropolitan act in the Polish legislature⁶. Thanks to the White Book, the government indicated that they were not going to impose solutions by means of the act and that they wanted to suggest the local government the initiative of introducing some facilitations in inter-municipal communities functioning as well as new financial tools. In the next part of the described document it could be read that legal tools did not guarantee the success and the foundation of metropolitan institutions was problematic. The document authors declare the introduction of dynamiting tools to Polish metropolitan areas in the form of municipal and district relations, the simplification of decision making procedures as well as the registration procedures shortening to 30 days. In its financial layer, the White Book referred to the Integrated Territorial Investments included in assumptions of the UE cohesion policy in the new financial institutions perspective for 2014-2020. The Integrated Territorial Investments were to be the basic integrating tools and they had to generate activists' pragmatic cooperation of the metropolitan areas meeting the needs of the cities whose participation in the Regional Operational Programs realization would have been increased significantly. Conditions

⁵ Zielona księga obszarów metropolitalnych. <https://mac.gov.pl/zielona-ksiega-obszarow-metropolitalnych/> (accessed 4 April 2012).

⁶ Biała Księga Obszarów Metropolitalnych. <https://mac.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/BK.pdf> (accessed 4 April 2012).

that should be fulfilled in order to take part in The Integrated Territorial Investments refer to the operation program elaboration, possessing the institutionalized and operational partnership in the form of an inter-community relationship, an association, a community agreement or a communal company as well as it is necessary to sign the agreement with the Regional Operational Programs manager⁷.

Assumptions similar to the described above document are included in the president's bill on "cooperation in the local government for the local and regional development". This document also does not deal with the strategies of creating institutionalized managing bodies in metropolitan areas as new units of the local government. This project puts a special emphasis on cooperation of the local government units as suitable tools for development generating and local public services realization. The provisions of the bill provide functioning of "territorial cooperation teams" that have to be the instruments of cooperation among communities, districts and a province in the field of local development realization and programming⁸.

Comparing the consolidation process of French metropolitan areas with the course of action chosen by the Polish authorities, we can definitely observe different approaches that have many sources, not only connected with the present policy but also with social and historical conditions. France is a country where the state and the public sector play a leading role in organizing collective life. The result of the above is the belief in the determining role of an institution as a collective activities regulator. It results in the over-supply of institutions that have to serve the integration and management of French agglomerations whose dense network creates a system that is not transparent and surely cost consuming but it fulfils the delegated tasks. In Polish conditions the state has definitely a weaker position and public institutions, especially those that are connected with the public authority, have a low level of public trust (Cybulska 2012). In connection to this, the lack of trust in the effectiveness of metropolitan areas managing institutions as well as grater confidence in market and pragmatic motivational mechanisms in the context of the weak process of crystallizing the general interest category in Polish public.

4. Conclusion

Trying to evaluate the chosen by the Polish government course of development of metropolitan areas, the basic criterion should be accepted.

⁷ Biała Księga Obszarów Metropolitalnych. <https://mac.gov.pl/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/BK.pdf> (accessed 4 April 2012).

⁸ Act on cooperation in local government for the local and regional development and on a change of same acts. Project is available on the webpage of the President of the Republic of Poland. <http://www.prezydent.pl/dialog/fdp/samorzad-terytorialny-dla-polski/inicjatywa-ustawodawcza/> (accessed 4 April 2013).

The criterion is the chance, which in the sequence of accepted solutions, initiates the factual process of integration and consolidation of big urban areas functioning nowadays separately and municipalities that often compete with each other. It should be agreed with the authors of the White Book of Metropolitan Areas, who state that institutions cannot be the end itself. On the other hand, these institutions appoint defined frameworks of the public action and introduce new play rules, which in the assistance of activists' motivation and awareness, can promote thinking and acting in categories of the whole metropolitan area interest. It seems that dual actions undertaken both in legal and formal spheres as well as actions that aim at shaping the appropriate awareness and metropolitan identity by creating discussion platforms and metropolitan area activists exchange are necessary. Taking into consideration the suggested legal solutions, including the functioning of the Integrated Territorial Investments realized in the framework of the territorial cooperation teams and comparing them to the situation of the Upper Silesia metropolitan area and the Upper Silesia Metropolitan Association, it is possible to have some doubts how the suggested formula will foster the cooperation and development dynamism of this area. The authors of the White Book write that by means of the suggested solutions they want to avoid conflicts among local activists, at the same time they plan to delegate the Integrated Territorial Investments management to the province capital mayor. Although such a solution is logical, it would mean the institutional blockade to consider the solution in the present distribution of political forces between the authorities of the Upper Silesia Metropolitan Association and the city of Katowice.

Accepted by the government the strategy of consolidation of Polish metropolitan areas in the pragmatic dimension and in reference to common translocal investments, to certain extent, the European Union integration logic is copied. In the case of European construction, the assumptions of the political institutions early establishment, it also appeared to be ineffective and the appropriate process of integration started from the economic dimension by founding first three European Communities in the 50's of the 20th century that had the economic nature and they referred to the plan of establishing the common market. The political integration had to appear as a natural consequence of strong economic connections, what happened in 1992 together with the establishment of the European Union. The presented mechanism was positively verified in case of the European continent and there are not bigger causes that let suppose that it will not work in the case of metropolitan areas integration. There is only one crucial drawback of this solution; it is the time that in connection to the social and economic processes flows faster than at the beginning of the 50's. Due to globalization

processes, which were discussed in the introduction, “the world extremely accelerated” at the beginning of 21st and the same processes that were made up in the period of some decades, nowadays they are run in several years. The transformation from the stage of the economic integration to the political one has taken Europe more than 40 years. Polish metropolitan areas cannot afford such a long waiting because it would mean to miss developmental opportunities that Poland can aim at in the perspective of coming years. The crucial time caesura is the financial perspective connected with our presence in the European Union. This perspective is stating now and probably this is the last one that is so generous. It is a specific chance to modernize Polish urban armature and the metropolitan areas consolidation that should become effective players on the European and world economic scene being the driving force of the endogen development of the Polish society even in the times when the inner sources of financing will be depleted.

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