

Abstract of dissertation entitled „Metropolisation as an element of the development policy of contemporary cities. Theoretical analysis and case study of the city of Wrocław”

Contemporarily, urban centers face very serious challenges around the world. They are linked, among others, to depopulation, movement of people (especially more affluent ones) from city centers to the outskirts, deepening deindustrialisation, disappearance of well-paid jobs or significant changes in the social structure. The development of urban centers is strongly dependent on both internal conditions such as the economic structure, human capital and existing infrastructure, as well as external conditions, which in present times are profoundly shaped by globalization processes. On the one hand, due to ‘the shrinkage of the world’ people have gained much greater opportunities for movement, communication and development, but on the other hand, a less friendly face of the same process manifests itself in a significant increase in competition on a global scale and a clear decline in the level of broadly defined stability of living conditions and social relations. The increase in competition for resources needed for functioning and development also applies to socio-economic organisms, to which cities belong. Those are mainly competing for resources such as human and financial capital. This doctoral thesis was devoted to the issue of metropolitan policy as one of the possible models for the development of large cities around the world. Metropolitan policy is a certain kind of response of municipal authorities to the challenges that globalization poses to these centers - in various aspects of its functioning.

The structure of the thesis consists of three chapters divided into subsections. The first chapter focuses on the subject-oriented approach and presents the area of problems and issues that will be analyzed in detail in further parts of the thesis. The author presents a complex transformation processes, which led to the creation of a very specific form of the city, namely the metropolis. In the further part of the thesis, urban centers were predominantly described through the prism of two disciplines: sociology of the city and social geography, as the spatial and social aspects of cities’ functioning constitutes the core of this analysis. The second chapter is mainly focused on the activities of political entities (primarily municipalities) and their impact on the process of transforming cities into the metropolises. Much attention was devoted to the implementation of development policies by municipalities that are to contribute to the development of centers. It is worth adding that both chapters are theoretical. The third

chapter aims to verify the theoretical assumptions of metropolitan policy presented in the previous chapters. Therefore, the author attempted at least a partial operationalization of the theoretical model described earlier. On this basis, a case study of Wrocław metropolization was carried out.

This doctoral dissertation is based essentially on qualitative methodology. Research questions, hypotheses and variables are descriptive. The main method, by which the research was conducted is an institutional analysis. Among the research methods used in the thesis, the modeling method plays an important role. On the basis of the metropolization policy model created by the author and the operational variables specifying it, the activities of the City Office of the city of Wrocław (including units and organizational cells) in the specified period of time were subjected to detailed analysis and subsequent selection. Another method used in the course of writing the thesis consisted in employing the conceptual framework of the studied area, including concepts such as: metropolization, agglomeration, metropolitan region, globalization and suburbanisation.

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