

# METROPOLITAN IDENTITY IN THE STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF CITIES DEVELOPMENT IN POLAND

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***Abstract.** The metropolisation processes strongly influence the nature of managing the territorial units' development. Thus setting the strategic targets and their effective implementation foster a permanent cooperation between many entities. This kind of interactive and partner co-governance requires an active involvement of the representatives of local territorial self-government units and other stakeholders in the development of an appropriate organizational culture, common to the metropolis and its functional area. The aim of the article is to present the concept of the metropolitan identity as a new type of collective identification, which has a strategic importance in planning and managing the cities development. The study was based on contemporary strategic management conceptions, especially in the field of organizational culture and identity, as well as development management. The theoretical considerations have been backed up by an analysis of the strategic documents of the city of Poznań and Poznań Agglomeration.*

***Keywords:** strategic management, local government, metropolitan identity.*

## 1. Introduction

The ongoing process of metropolisation affects not only the biggest cities, but also the territorial self-government units surrounding them. The changes mostly concern the strategic development management as they require permanent cooperation of local governments, citizens, as well as cultural, economic and civic institutions that reaches beyond administrative borders. Therefore, it is important for them to develop an appropriate organizational culture, common to the metropolis and its functional area.

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## **2. Strategic development management in the functioning of territorial self-government units**

The idea of strategic management refers to problem solving regardless of the nature of the difficulties that the organization faces. In general, strategic management is a process of identifying and implementing strategies in the organization, as well as defining and redefining the strategy in response to changes in the environment or with the intent to advance or even induce such changes [1, pp. 29]. Its main elements (and thus objectives) can be defined as [2, pp. 19]:

- strategic planning – establishing overall strategic goals and objectives, selecting appropriate policies for the acquisition and distribution of resources and ensuring a basis for turning policies into action commitments,
- resource management – determining the resources to meet identified goals and objectives, establishing the organizational processes, procedures and operations necessary to fulfill the strategic plan, as well as allocating the resources in accordance with strategic priorities,
- control and evaluation – scheduling programs from the point of commitment to completion, exercising control by anticipating and reacting to deviations between predicted and actual performance, monitoring activities to determine their reasonability.

Therefore strategic management reflects the organizations desire to achieve success through integrating different approaches and knowledge in various fields.

Yet, the specificity of the public sector, in which organizations are functioning in order to pursue the public interest through providing public

goods and services, enforces the extension of the public strategic management concept with additional characteristics [3, pp. 281-294]:

- responding to changes in policy requirements arising from the increasing complexity of the external environment
- focusing on the problems caused by the imperfections of the market mechanisms,
- embracing a very wide range of activities (solving problems at all levels of management),
- preference of tasks implementation through programs and projects undertaking,
- focusing on the development of programs for the realization of future demand for public goods and services (as specified in the development scenarios),
- taking into account the qualitative aspects of organizations functioning,
- the desire to support activities of other stakeholders.

These features result from the belief that it is impossible to design, implement and evaluate strategic objectives in the public sector based solely on economic criteria.

The territorial self-government units (TSU), which are considered the most basic public organizations under Polish administrative conditions, consist of: society, territorial space and local government authorities. The main objective of TSU's functioning is to provide goods and services to the governed community, functioning not only as an initiator, controller and producer of these services, but also as a provider of the economic profitability of such actions [4, pp. 161]. Therefore the strategic management in territorial self-government units is multifaceted – consists of space and people, who not only govern themselves, but also are interconnected through various social and economic networks. It's specificity results from [1, pp. 32]:

- TSUs actions in the public sphere are regulated by administrative law instead of the ownership law,
- the source of power of the local authorities derives from public trust (local governments are formed in democratic elections),
- TSU's are public life institutions and cannot be assessed only on the basis of rational and measurable economic quantities,
- the costs of public services are only subjectively and partially related to their amount and quality,

- the measure of the effects of strategic management is the common good of a variety of stakeholders, which manifests itself in certain distance from the investments and actions taken.

The functioning of TSUs is associated with the exercise of a wide range of issues and problems, which are key not only on the local level, but also from the whole country's point of view. The range of tasks includes i.a. spatial order, environment protection, supplying water and sewage infrastructure and electricity, healthcare, public education and culture.

Thus the strategic management in territorial self-government units can be defined as a future-oriented process of planning and selecting development goals, implementing the adopted tasks, as well as their monitoring and controlling [1, pp. 32]. Its main characteristics are [5, pp. 103]:

- complexity in the approach to development problems (perceiving the economic, social, spatial, ecological and cultural spheres as interdependent),
- efficient use of endogenous growth factors,
- treating a TSU as part of the environment,
- orientation for the future (on perspective targets),
- orientation for outcomes (achieving developmental goals),
- adherence to the principle of rational management,
- gradual introduction of sustainable development rules.

The most common instruments of strategic management in territorial self-government units are [6, pp. 46]: development strategies, operational plans for the strategies, the monitoring systems for both these documents and strategy actualizations.

One of the most important aspects of the functioning of the local governments is managing the territorial growth. It does not however restrain only to providing goods and services for the citizens, but should be understood as a commitment of local authorities to ensure the best possible standard of living for the inhabitants of the local community. Therefore, territorial development management can be defined as managing the subsystems of a certain territory in order to achieve the determined objectives [7, pp. 39]. The subject of this management is the community that resides on a certain territory, which acts through public authorities, public administration and other institutions representing it.

The classical strategic development management approach perceives the territorial self-government units as territorial organizations. This type of organizations need to fulfill three conditions [8, pp. 22]:

- spatial condition – the primary area of territorial organization's activity is a unit of territorial division, created in order to perform public administration,
- social condition – the people forming the territorial organization are a community of citizens inhabiting a defined territory,
- legal-economic management condition – the basis of the territorial community actions is the relations structure that arises out of legal acts and establishes the system of internal and external development and functioning conditions.

Even though the core of these assumptions had not changed, the processes of globalization and metropolisation have seriously affected the nature of strategic development management, making it a significant challenge for the territorial self-government units – not only the big cities, but also the smaller units surrounding them.

### **3. Metropolisation and its consequences for the strategic development management – towards a metropolitan identity**

The term metropolisation refers to the process of forming a new type of spatial structure, i.e. the city that obtains an advantage over other units in the region and builds its importance in the international dimension [9, p. 10]. It is thus connected with development and involves focusing the economic, financial, scientific, authority, media and cultural institutions potential, as well as the main functions in managing the economy, innovation and public services. The process results in formatting a metropolis (core city) that in turn generate the metropolitan areas, which exceed the administrative boundaries.

The term metropolis refers to large urban centers with a high level of services and infrastructure, as well as innovativeness in all core areas of their functioning [9, p. 13]. The most important criteria that define the city as a metropolis also include: the uniqueness and specificity of a place (its historical significance and architectural and urban qualities) and the presence of strong centripetal integration links with an extensive suburban area – the metropolitan area.

The metropolises are thus urban centers and their functional areas that are at least the national centers for economic governance. Apart from their economic potential, they should also offer higher-order functions and public services and perform symbolic functions. The other significant qualities of metropolises are also: tourist attractiveness, presence of highest standard scientific (universities, research centers) and technological institutions. Metropolitan functions include also the external and internal transport availability of the city and the functional area.

The metropolisation process directly affects the nature of the territorial organization, causing a change in its characteristics [10, p. 60]. The functions performed by the core city are determined functionally and spatially and can exceed the administrative borders of territorial self-government units. Therefore the community that creates the territorial organization is a group of people connected rather by common socio-economic interests than just certain rights and obligations. As a result, the key causative mechanisms in the functioning of these new metropolitan organizations are partnership and voluntary cooperation.

Thus, the effective implementation of strategic public policies requires a sustained cooperation of many territorial self-government units. This means that the territorial management should have the nature of an interactive co-governance, in which the success depends on the capacity of the core city to trigger the abilities of the members of the social system to actively adapt and create new solutions through a process of social communication, negotiation and communication [11, p. 98]. The essential elements of this concept are: stakeholder engagement, openness, transparency, equality, non-discrimination in the use of public services and accountability of decision-makers.

Such an approach reflects the changes that affect the nature of strategic regional development management, which raises the importance of cooperation within the multi-level governance system. Apart from that, the new paradigm of territorial development [7, pp. 72-74]:

- takes into account the territorial consequences of new socio-economic challenges (such as globalization and metropolisation),
- focuses on the endogenous development potentials of a territory, not on the exogenous support mechanisms,
- emphasizes the strategic approach by concentrating on key priorities and their efficient management,

- promotes the learning process through prospective evaluation of the actual impacts of the policies,
- recognizes the importance of real and virtual mobility growth in the society.

Therefore the participation of territorial self-government units that are members of the metropolis is crucial for the effective strategic planning, making decisions, managing resources, as well as controlling and evaluating the development policies, while working towards reducing and mitigating the disputes and the most efficient use of the potentials of these entities. The changes caused by the progressive metropolisation and the new paradigm of territorial development enforce the necessity of change in the way of local communities functioning. These changes involve the transformation of the territorial organization's culture (the organizational culture of the core city and its functional area).

The organizational culture is therefore understood as an internal variable, i.e. an element (subsystem) of the territorial organization that can be effectively managed. Its core is the organizational identity – ‘a symbolic collective interpretation of the people who form the organization on what the organization is and what it should be like’ [12, p. 17]. It is therefore a consensus on: values, organizational culture, operating philosophy, orientation, mission and vision, as well as organization membership that meet the following criteria [12, p. 17]:

- the criterion for determination of organization's key features – the organizational identity reflects its essence, the basic ‘existential’ issues on which the consensus of its member is based,
- the criterion for diversity ascertaining – the organizational identity is defined by a sense of separateness of the organization's members, they identify with the organization and define its boundaries and inclusion or exclusion criteria,
- the criterion of continuity over time – the identity is a result of temporal continuation and the organization is integrated through legal and management conventions, which in turn are supported by the beliefs of its members as well as other stakeholders opinion about the continuity of the organizations existence, despite the ongoing changes.

Organizational identity consists of cultural patterns and values, basic assumptions, social and organizational norms, as well as ways of communication (myths, narratives), symbols and rituals.

The ongoing processes of globalization and metropolisation contribute to changes that enforce the necessity of shaping the organizational identity that enables efficient and effective territorial management in metropolises. This emerging new type of collective identity can be called the metropolitan identity, which can only be achieved in the case of stimulating the ongoing cultural change. The process of assimilation of the amended culture consists of the following stages [13, p. 74]:

- extraction of the current norms and standards on the surface,
- the determination of new development directions,
- establishment of new cultural norms,
- identification of the cultural gap,
- elimination of the cultural gap.

The actions aimed at setting the new directions of development need to begin as soon as possible. Otherwise, the functioning of metropolis can be disrupted by the negative effects of the lack of cultural change such as [14, pp. 30-44]:

- limiting the possibility of implementing new strategies – the values existing in the cultures of local communities may quarrel with the assumptions of new public policies and hamper the cooperation in shaping the planning documents,
- causing problems in the situation of alliances and merging the entities – the inadequacy of local cultures may hinder the participation of territorial self-government units in the assumptions of the new paradigm of territorial management,
- the difficulties with the implementation of new forms of organization, new technologies and changes in the structure – changes of this type are essential for the proper functioning of the metropolitan centers,
- generation of intergroup conflicts in organizations,
- problems with the communication system – different cultural perspectives of specific communities prevent the convergence of perception,
- difficulties with secondary socialization of individuals that lead to the reduction of possibility of assimilation of new members,
- reduction in the effectiveness of cooperation.

The key to effective strategic development management in metropolises in the face of a new territorial development paradigm is therefore the establishment of cultural norms that are common to the societies that inhabit the metropolitan areas. The difficulty of this task results from the fact that the metropolitan identity depends largely on the norms and values shared by the communities of the territorial self-government units that are members of the metropolis. Thus, it is plausible to speak rather about metropolitan identities; however it is possible to identify several elements that can reflect the shared values that are relevant to all of the residents of the metropolitan areas:

- the functioning of a network civil society that reaches beyond its classically conceived administrative boundaries,
- taking into account the importance of real and virtual mobility of the community,
- the acceptance of the development of network forms to organize the economic, social and cultural activities,
- the belief in the necessity of an active participation of the representatives of the metropolitan community in shaping the public policies of the metropolitan areas, which leads to an increase in the effectiveness of public interventions and directing them to the real social and economic needs,
- a multi-level and interactive metropolis management performed through territorial self-government unions and associations, as well as various intersectoral partnerships – joint negotiating, monitoring and coordination of public policies with the use of endogenous potential of a certain functional area.

Thus the metropolitan identity may not have the same emotive character as the national or regional identities do. Its main values are rather: the respect for human rights, the cult of real and virtual mobility, social trust and a broad participation of social actors in management. However, creating the connections between the TSU's communities that are part of the metropolis will also require the use of traditional norms and the existing proceedings patterns.

The metropolitan identity is thus a crucial issue in the strategic development management of metropolises, as setting the strategic targets and their effective implementation require a permanent cooperation between many entities, including not only the authorities, but also the representatives of economic, cultural and social actors and institutions.

Therefore expanding and sustaining the organizational culture based on participation and cooperation becomes a strategic target itself. One of the first metropolises in Poland that recognized the importance of developing the metropolitan identity is the Poznan Agglomeration.

### 3. The metropolitan identity in strategic development management of the Poznań Agglomeration

The Poznan Agglomeration consists of the core city of Poznan and twenty one communes, including: Buk, Czerwonak, Dopiewo, Kleszczewo, Komorniki, Kostrzyn, Kórnik, Luboń, Mosina, Murowana Goślina, Oborniki, Pobiedziska, Puszczykowo, Rokietnica, Skoki, Stęszew, Suchy Las, Swarzędz, Szamotuły, Śrem and Tarnowo Podgórne (Figure 1). As of 2014, the area covers 2 884 km<sup>2</sup> and is inhabited by 1 009 216 people [15]. In 2011 the territorial self-government units that are the members of agglomeration signed ‘The Poznan Agglomeration Development Strategy – Poznan Metropolis 2020’.



Figure 1. The Poznań Agglomeration.

Source: *Strategia Rozwoju Aglomeracji Poznańskiej – Metropolia Poznań 2020*, Centrum Badań Metropolitalnych, Poznań 2011, p. 145.

The document reflects the participatory and multi-level character of the metropolis management – it was created through a cooperation of local governments, universities, as well as public, social and economic organizations and consulted with the societies of each commune.

The strategic targets and actions planned are aimed at ensuring a greater territorial and functional cohesion of the agglomeration, through the improvement of the spatial order, state of the natural environment economic growth, infrastructure development, as well as the integration of public transport and improvement of social services. The targets are supplemented by a broad strategic axis related to creating the forms of cooperation and effective management based on the participation of territorial self-government units and other public and commercial institutions. One of the core programs in this vision of metropolitan management refers directly to the metropolitan identity.

The ‘Metropolitan identity’ strategic target aims at shaping, developing and promoting the identification with Poznan metropolis as a common place to live, work, rest and use of service beyond administrative boundaries [16, pp. 128]. This new kind of identity is defined as ‘agglomerative/metropolitan thinking’ that supplements and changes the local identifications and is an important factor fostering the development of the region. It is also understood as an instrument of spatial and functional integration, affecting not only local governments and members of communes societies, but also companies and institutions that will use the metropolis idea to promote and identify territorially with the Poznań Agglomeration. The proposed actions to develop the metropolitan identity are [16, pp. 129]:

- dissemination of the metropolis idea in primary, secondary and higher education – through lessons about agglomeration on subjects such as: civics, geography, history or economy,
- creation and dissemination of educational materials on the metropolis, its history, environment, infrastructure, sport and cultural events, as well as the actions of local governments and civic organizations,
- the activity of local and regional media in the field of creating the metropolitan idea, climate of trust and the feeling of identification with the Agglomeration,
- the use of existing and organization of new events, festivals covering the whole metropolitan area,

- supporting the social initiatives, associations and foundations, NGO's that promote metropolitan values and actions,
- creation of 'the metropolitan company' brand – supporting the companies that promote metropolitan actions, organization of a "Metropolis-friendly company" competition,
- metropolitan social barometer – regular monitoring of public opinion on topics related to metropolitan awareness and identification.

It is therefore plausible to claim that the territorial self-government units that form the Poznan metropolis are aware of the functional character of the metropolitan identity and recognize the need for participation and cooperation in the globalization era, which fosters virtual and real mobility.

Moreover – although it is not stated directly in the description of the metropolitan identity strategic target – the document states also the emotive core of this new type of identification. The common values and symbols of the Poznan Agglomeration are [16, p. 30]:

- the historic heritage of the Poland state and Piast dynasty,
- the memory of organic work and opposition against germanisation (called "the longest war in modern Europe"),
- the Greater Poland region thriftiness, hospitality, diligence, reliability and a passion of order,
- cultural ties, including dialect, manners and regional cuisine.

These assumptions are further supplemented with [16, p. 35]: liberalism (political attitudes are closer to the economic liberalism, which is reflected in the parliamentary election results), 'bourgeois character' (conservative attitude, mostly moral conservatism) and 'wealth' (a relatively higher standard of living compared to other cities, which manifests itself i.e. one of the highest purchasing power of the population in Poland).

Most of the characteristics mentioned in the strategy are strictly related to the historical inhabitants of the Poznan Metropolis. Therefore they may not have the binding value for the newcomers from other parts of Poland or foreign countries, whose settlement is a natural process in the globalization and metropolisation context. Their assimilation to 'agglomerative thinking' will require finding much more universal values that could bind the metropolis. Yet, the decision to consider the metropolitan identity as a strategic target in the development management

of Polish metropolises was unique and innovative, not to mention necessary for the efficient growth.

Nevertheless, ‘The Poznan Agglomeration Development Strategy – Poznan Metropolis 2020’ is a document of a higher order, which provisions must be reflected in the development strategies of the territorial self-government units that are members of the metropolis. Unfortunately, the depth analysis of these documents shows that most of the local strategies (13 out of 21) do not even mention the metropolitan identity, either directly or indirectly. This tendency is disturbing, as most of these documents were adopted after the agglomeration strategy was passed.

Among the others, three main tendencies can be distinguished. First, it is possible to distinguish the documents that stand almost in opposition to the provisions of the agglomeration strategy. Some of the territorial self-government units state directly that their own identity and individualism is much more important than the metropolitan identity:

- *It is obvious that the Śrem municipality doesn't have to be interested in participating in the implementation of all of the projects, but should choose only those projects that will serve the satisfaction of its own citizens (...)[17]*
- *At the same time, the location in the metropolis is not just a passive submission to the stronger tendencies, but it is also a conscious and active formation of the trends, while maintaining the communes own identity and individuality (...)[18]*

Other communes' commitment to the metropolitan idea seems to be based strictly on the expectation of benefits:

- *The land of Szamotuly is a region of great folklore traditions, as well as rich culture and history. However, maintaining this kind of activity requires considerable organizational and financial resources (...)[19]*

Finally, there is a group of territorial self-government units that refer directly to the metropolis as a vital part of their development plans and that want to play a crucial role in the development processes: Mosina and Swarzędz:

- *The Mosina commune 2020+ in the metropolitan area of Poznań is a centre of small, dynamically operating service companies that is well communicated with the city and the neighboring municipalities and provides services for the population in the internal consumer market and the business of Poznań, as well as the southern part of agglomeration (...). Good railway and road communication allows an easy access to the labor market and high-order services in Poznań and the southern part of agglomeration for the local inhabitants (...)[20].*

Therefore, only Poznań, as the core city, refers directly to the idea of metropolitan identity in its development strategy – the creation of Poznań

Metropolis is one of the four strategic targets set in the document. It should be achieved through actions aiming at increasing both the international importance of the city in the network of European metropolises and the raise of cohesion through functional and spatial integration of the city and agglomeration [21, p. 133]. The creation of metropolitan awareness and identity is supposed to include the development and promotion of identification of the Poznań citizens with the metropolis as a common place to live, work and recreate, as well as regular surveys on the metropolitan awareness. None of the provisions suggest the values and symbols that could be common for the core city and the functional area. Moreover, the 'Cultural Poznań' strategic programme focuses mainly on increasing the city's cultural offer attractiveness, the cultural competences of the inhabitants and creating an international brand for Poznań [21, pp. 169-170]. Thus, it is plausible to claim that even the core city focuses mostly on developing its own identity, perceiving it as the main component of the metropolitan idea. Such actions may be considered oppressive by the territorial self-government units that are part of the metropolis, as the hidden rivalry may hinder the participation in the multi-level strategic development management.

#### **4. Conclusions**

The process of metropolisation enforces the cooperation and participation of various territorial self-government units in the strategic development management. The common potentials and problems emerging from the functional character of the metropolis can only be effectively used through multi-level interactive approach, in which all local units are perceived as partners. Thus, it is essential for the metropolitan strategic development management to create a proper organizational culture that would be inclusive and conciliate the values, symbols and rituals of all the communes that are affected by the core city. Therefore, the creation of the metropolitan identity becomes one of the most important strategic targets, which achievement is crucial for the effective development management of the metropolis.

The Poznan Agglomeration was one of the first associations of the municipalities to adopt a metropolis development strategy that would refer

to the idea of metropolitan identity. Yet, as the in depth-research of the strategic documents of each of the territorial self-government units reveals that most of the provisions of ‘The Poznan Agglomeration Development Strategy – Poznan Metropolis 2020’ have only a declarative character. Most of the local governments consider the cooperation rather as a promise of long-term profit than as a possibility to create real mechanisms fostering development. The provisions on working on the metropolitan identity are contradicted by the internal focus on developing the local values and culture of each commune.

The Poznan metropolis strategy can therefore be perceived as an impulse for a shift in the strategic development management of cities in Poland. The document itself creates the possibilities to cooperate and expand the idea of metropolitan identity. It is necessary however to enforce the cohesion of the provisions in the metropolis strategy and the lower level strategies of local communities. Without such changes, the metropolitan identity will not be a real identity and will not be able to provide the bonds, values and rituals that could foster the effectiveness of the strategic development management.

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