

## **GEOGRAPHY OF AUTHORITY IN POLAND**

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**Summary:** The great changes that followed the year 1989 in Poland, threw the structures of then existing and functioning authorities into disarray and gave the origin of brand new decision-making centres. The radical change influenced the range and territorial reach of administrative, judicial and municipal authorities. The problem appears to be more absorbing when adding that after 1989 numerous conceptions of the new territorial and administrative division of the country were published. These structural changes are after all characteristic for periods of governmental transformations in every political system. And the spatial division of a country always exerts an influence on shaping social and economic relations, together with communication system in a particular region. The problem of the new territorial division has been always presented during the times of political transformations. The old decisive centres were destroyed and the new ones are formed in the altered political, social and economic scenery of Poland after 1989. Owing to administrative division of the country, the shape of social and economic relations and communication system changes, this is why it seems challenging to study the influence of administrative divisions on modelling provincials' and administrative districts' authorities. There have been repeated changes in number and structure of territorial division in Poland between 1945 and 1996. From political and economic reasons, the new administrative centres were formed. Some attempts were made to decentralise the government, as the effect however, its centralisation took place. In order to study spatial influence of the authorities, variability of the centres and connections between different dimensions of the governments, there have been pointed out a couple of aims to be reached during the research. One of the aims was to mark presently

and previously functioning territorial arrangement in reference to historical and geographical lands and economic regions. Giving a try to study territorial measurement in relation to political, religious, social and economic structures. Presenting the changes in spatial differentiation of political, economical, catholic church, administrative and judicial, before and after 1989, and self-governmental power after its one year functioning, centres of power. There have been put a lot of efforts in the research to demonstrate spatial differentiation of centres of power during the times of political transformation. The attempt has been made to describe and explain the process of territorial distribution of authorities, on a local level (administrative units), and on over-regional level (province) understood as functioning informal connections between the representatives of political power, administrative and self-governed centres. The last aim of the research was to show the factors forming provincials' and administrative centres' of real power and its changes after 1989.

**Key words:** cities, authority, centre of power, territorial structures, rank of centers.

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### **Introduction**

The great changes that followed the year 1989 in Poland, threw the structures of then existing and functioning authorities into disarray and gave the origin of brand new decision-making centres ( in spatial aspect). The radical change influenced the range and territorial reach of administrative, judicial and municipal authorities. The problem appears to be more absorbing when adding that after 1989 numerous conceptions of the new territorial and administrative division of the country were published. These structural changes are after all characteristic for periods of governmental transformations in every political system. And the spatial division of a country always exerts an influence on shaping social and economic relations, together with communication system in a particular region. The schedule of economic authorities has undergone the change as well. Due to capital investments many new economic bases are developing and the already existing ones are being converted into new modern technologies. A great number of economic

decisions are taken within local authorities' centres. The change affected the Polish Roman-catholic church in terms of territory and structure ( the church that has always played informal but significant political and economic role in the country). From the point of view of electoral geography, the studies of changes in the local authorities' influential range on territorial structures of each of the political party, that is clearly seen on the results of political preferences researches and people's political attitude.

The problem of the new territorial division is always present during the times of political transformations. The old decisive centres were destroyed and the new ones are formed in the altered political, social and economic scenery of Poland after 1989. Owing to administrative division of the country, the shape of social and economic relations and communication system changes, this is why it seems challenging to study the influence of administrative divisions on modelling provincials' and administrative districts' authorities. There have been repeated changes in number and structure of territorial division in Poland between 1945 and 1996. From political and economic reasons, the new administrative centres were formed. Some attempts were made to decentralise the government, as the effect however, its centralisation took place.

Also nowadays, enormous influence on forming territorial division of Poland, based on natural, environmental factors, and functioning social and economic structures, exerted particular interests of political parties, social and economical ambitions of people living in the regional capitals and also existing territorial, political, economic and religious structures of local organisations. In order to study spatial influence of the authorities, variability of the centres and connections between different dimensions of the governments, there have been pointed out a couple of aims to be reached during the research.

One of the aims was to mark presently and previously functioning territorial arrangement in reference to historical and geographical lands and economic regions. Giving a try to study territorial measurement in relation to political, religious, social and economic structures. Presenting the changes in spatial differentiation of political, economical, catholic church,

administrative and judicial, before and after 1989, and self-governmental power after its one year functioning, centres of power. There have been put a lot of efforts in the research to demonstrate spatial differentiation of centres of power during the times of political transformation. The attempt has been made to describe and explain the process of territorial distribution of authorities, on a local level (administrative units), and on over-regional level (province) understood as functioning informal connections between the representatives of political power, administrative and self-governed centres. The last aim of the research was to show the factors forming provincials' and administrative centres' of real power and its changes after 1989.

### **Methodologies, methods and problems**

In order to obtain the goals of the undertaken research work, functioning of the previous and present administrative division of Poland should be estimated in consideration of historical and geographical lands and the economic regions, basing on the existing literature. The essential stage of the research was to study spatial dimension of the authorities in regard of functioning of governmental, religious, social and economic structures and environmental conditions (the extent they played on forming the territorial divisions). An attempt has been made to show the succeeding changes in spatial differentiation of governmental centres, political, administrative, judicial and catholic church power in XX c. In order to demonstrate continuity or variability of the power's centres. Historical determinations of location of the political centres and different structures of the church were taken under consideration here. For economic and self-governmental institutions, forming of decisive centres were presented after 1989, mainly due to their variability or their lack (as far the second is concerned).

Spatial differentiation and functioning of centres of power during the period of transformation is notably the effect of successive changes of the ruling groups in Polish government from 1989 to 1996. In that period eight prime ministers were officially selected to form the proper government, meanwhile six of whom managed to form their cabinets, obviously changing territorial administration and its

range of duties each time, and what's more the Ministry of Administration and Internal Affairs were reformed as well. The new political "elite" leads effectively to seize the power for local elite on regional level and power for the party leaders in the capital city.

Obviously one could easily indicate the politicians responsible for their actions while holding the office, but the problem is the power was held by executive organs of political elite with the lack of apolitical civil servants and very weak legislative and judicial power. Moreover among many members of political establishment there apparently dominated conviction that the system of governing in the country was to serve in the interests of the party that actually held the power, not for the sake of the whole nation. That obviously leads to postponing the difficult decisions of fundamental meaning for the country, for the period "after the elections". And simply because terms of office of the parliament, the president and local authorities were different each following year, the party led to weakness of the country on purpose to reach the self-interest of the party holding the power, by passing a bills that were very likely suitable and acceptable for electors.

Other serious problem concerning trying to judge and classify centres of the power is the process of forming the numerous groups of people, who functioned in so called party's power, leaving one party that has lately lost the power and choosing the membership in the other, promising one, that has just won the elections. The mechanism of making the selection between parties' members in Poland unfortunately hasn't been invented yet. One of the explanations can be the relatively short period of establishing and giving the shape to democracy in the country, however, in case of union structures the "leadering" way of holding the office and a ban on being in authority more than two terms of office (introduced by Solidarity) had all a great influence on choosing the elite to govern the country. It is also precisely seen that joining the power and political posts, not only by prominent politicians, but also by any other politician on a lower level, has a basic influence on forming the centres of the power.

The weakness of the legislature, huge corruption among the executive is accompanied by the unusual aversion or even disability of the judiciary to mould the state ruled by law. The

topic, however, is so extensive that it certainly deserves separate study. Certainly it does not excuse numerous prescribed 'political' matters ( files burnt by the secret police), lack of sentences for many commonly known economic scandals, not to mention exceptional mercy even for criminal cases. Thus, certain conditions are appearing, which enable people who grossly depart from the truth ( e.g. one of the most popular was the president's untrue coverage concerning his education) or who claim someone else's achievements to be their own (the plagiarism of the M.A. thesis or Ph. D. dissertation case) or finally who lie and steal using meaningless phrases to function with impunity in political reality. Unfortunately, there has never existed well developed „losing honour” concept among parts of the ruling elite of the Noble Republic or the II Republic of Poland connected with excluding from the ruling group which has strengthened the existing wielding system and has heighthened its territorial spreading phenomenon. It seems as though the on-going territorial spreading process, despite public declarations, leads to wielding centralisation increase. Compared to the political elites the wielding system in the Catholic Church structures is utterly different. Of course this system cannot be mentioned as an example of democracy which managing church structures lack as a diocese supervisor is the only person formally in charge of decisions made in each diocese.

Another component responsible for structures and centres of power is keeping to a large degree state property in economy. In fact every country's political elite's influence on its economy is significant and economy and politics point of contact causes corruption, however, in Poland no serious efforts are undertaken in order to improve this situation; as for appointing members of political sphere to supervisory board posts one conclusion comes to mind that the state is being constantly appropriated by the consecutive political groups wielding.

However, this issue also deserves much more in-depth analysis than trying to describe power centre formation. However, in order to point to economic centres it is necessary to take into consideration at least part of this phenomenon. Such an example could be given: a relatively small, even as for state conditions, Warsaw BIG Bank takes over one of the

largest in the country Bank of Gdansk, as a result of which Gdansk, being one of the six biggest cities in Poland, no longer has a bank of over-regional importance. Similarly significant influence does the policy exert on investments, especially on those with foreign capital. For that reason, the analysis of certain banks and companies headquarters spatial diversity was chosen in order to distinguish bank and insurance institutions as well as capital investing centres from the power centres.

As a result of the foregoing research it was possible, to some extent, to characterise the power's spatial dimensions and its territorial extent. The horizontal and perpendicular connections between various kinds of power were pointed at, also special attention was drawn to the increasing, against political declarations, extent of its centralisation in government institutions, bureaucratic structures (community health centre) and party machinery (assignment of supervisory boards of state enterprises, guiding mass media on the politics). The conclusions coming from overlapping territorial structures of certain types of power (economic, managing, religious) with connections occurring between them seem interesting.

Particularly interesting, though, appear the changes in the Catholic Church structures, as the Church against the rule of total obedience and subordination to the superior power cultivated for nearly 2000 years, was the only analysed institution which has shown strong decentralisation tendency. Instead of twenty-seven strongly diverse with economic potential dioceses, thirty- nine new dioceses of different boundaries were introduced. Another problem deserving more attention than this study can devote is the economic potential of the Catholic Church in Poland and its changes concerning the changing of limits and number of the faithful in individual dioceses. Unfortunately, the last issue is hard enough to study as not more than two diocese supervisors have published the dioceses' budget data so far. Similar problems concerning lack of detailed information or inability to publish them have occurred while the influence of diversity in army structures on the moulding of the power centres was estimated. Too optimistic judge concerning access to data as well as significant changes which the Polish Army has undergone on

joining NATO unabled the analysis of force and army structures' influence on moulding power centres. However, after dissolving the Warsaw Pact followed by joining NATO revealing changes in the army headquarter structures became possible at least in broad outline.

Comparison of department structures, which show no common features, has become an utterly separate problem. Only are the headquarters of the most important units located in the biggest urban centres. Complicated system of the judiciary structures divided into courts of various properties shows no connection with the territorial state division neither with department institutions nor with the council structures which, in addition, double half of the department structures authorities.

Analysis of numerous regional division conceptions and their changes carried out during the new administrative divisions of the country helped to point at the main power centres of over-regional significance. Natural conditions, especially location of transportation and occurring or lack of natural resources, had a great influence on their formation. In order to present the power centres it has been provisionally accepted that according to the latest administrative division it occurs on three levels of control: over-regional ( provinces), local ( administrative units ) and communal power centres which according to the extent of the authorities and level of concentration have not been judged. The latest assumption is entitled only because part of urban communes' function is based on so-called 'administrative unit of Grodno' principle, thus they can be compared only with equivalent units.

### **Analyse of division and centres**

While working out these issues another administrative division and a council reform was introduced during the parliament's and president's stormy sessions after having won the elections and having formed Jerzy Buzek government by the AWS and UW coalition. This change has brought enormous amount of statistics into the new units of the latest division but at the same time for some issues no statistical information occur. Therefore, former statistics dating the time before the latest 1999 division were used in the given examples. Thanks to the collected data and assessment of the following centres'



size and hierarchy it was possible to set two ratings against each other: cities of over-regional significance and those of local importance. Furthermore, due to matching them with election preferences, results of parliamentary and council elections, dominant political options in the election period have been presented for certain centres. Readers will judge to what extent intended aims were realised.

In order to present regional and local power centres it was necessary to characterise criterion which a city should fulfil so that it could be regarded as a centre. Among the presented in the following chapters divisions: administrative, council, in the Catholic Church structures and the most influential parties and political groups power centres, financial institutions headquarters, individual department structures, the judiciary, army, PKP (Polish National Rails), post office, customs office, Inland Revenue, colleges head offices and other listed in the text, it is not sufficient enough to compare individual cities. It results from the assessment problem of particular kinds of power influence among individual centres. It seems impossible to count and compare the extent and force of influence, for example, of a big bank's head-quarter with that of a n archdiocese head office, a military district or any court.

Thus, two systems of centres hierarchy were accepted at the beginning of this study. The first presents in each part, as far as it was possible, the structure of individual government and council power, the judiciary, political parties, financial institutions , the Catholic Church and in the least extent, according to the problem with reaching detailed information and possibility of presenting them, the army structure. The second system, however, on accepting certain level of generalisation, enabled to divide, as regards the size of power and the extent of its influence, the state cities into three categories. The first concerns cities of over-regional significance. In order to determine them twenty selected criterion were accepted which from over a hundred centres of similar features helped to indicate those with the highest concentration rate of made decisions, finance, investments and what follows power. To determine cities from the second category, also called local power centres, only these cities were chosen whose size, number of population, wealth (ratio of

budget and number of inhabitants) as well as investments, decisions and power concentration extent distinguish from other administrative district cities. For obvious reasons these centres fulfil at the same time, for their nearest surrounding, the role of local power centres. In the third group appear these administrative district centres whose significance and extent of the wielding power is mainly the result of decisions concerning appointing local administrative centre in them and which, for a particular reason, fulfil only the directives from above.

In order to put together cities of over-regional significance fulfilling twenty functions criterion was chosen. Six categories among the chosen criterion define the provincial capital's status as the state administrative centre since 1700 until the present time. Historical criterion in forming a centre justifies the choice since in case of increasing number of units of equivalent centres power was generally located in power centres which had already existed. The next two include future power centres concerning the plan of state division into macro-economic regions and a government proposal of 1998 state division. Taking these two groups into consideration is a logical adoption of regional , design and economic research results carried out after 1950, especially after dividing the state into 49 units on 1975. The government proposal was accepted as the second criterion ensuing a trial of adjusting regions which as regards the area and the number of people could compete with the EU regions as regards economy.

The next two categories present the Polish Catholic Church structure before and after its re-organisation in 1992. In the first case, for the sake of metropolis (5), dioceses (27) and relatively small number of archdiocese, only cities with diocese headquarters were chosen since selecting only metropolis dating up to 1992 would not correspond with the real power range and influence of individual units. However, after forming 39 territorial units and appointing 13 metropolis instead of existing dioceses it has been recognised the taking into consideration all the bishop head offices will only increase the number of cities of over-regional significance. However, considering only metropolis will be helpful as regards its relatively small number (13) to indicate metropolis' centres. It seems even more appropriate as before the 1992 division part of dioceses and their superiors administered budget

comparable to that of the smallest metropolis, and after the number of dioceses has increased by twelve, differences between diocese centres have flattened.

Another criterion taken into consideration in cities division is a number of institutions and their net income which has visible influence on forming power centres, sometimes even creating administrative units. Institutions from the '500' list accomplishing income of over 50 million zloty net were considered. Along with bank headquarters spatial diversity, it has enabled to define financial significance of certain centres. In this case appears a problem of investments location in places surrounding big centres such as Tarnowo Podgórne near Poznań, towns of Warsaw agglomeration or Katowice conurbation as well as the matter of separate classification of Gdańsk and Gdynia which are included in the Three-city (collective noun for the cities of Gdańsk, Sopot and Gdynia). In these cases, it has been recognised that location of institutions in places closely surrounding big centres raises their importance and if no other functions are fulfilled (e.g. in Gdynia) they do not have a character of a power centre. Another criterion connected with finance is locating bank headquarters in towns. In this case, banks head offices concentration determines extremely low diversity extent of centres, thus all banks regardless their number of branches, capital and the range of provided services.

The next criterion concerns the number and intensity of foreign connections as well as the influence of national minorities that to some extent decide about appointing consular post in a centre. For that criterion it seems that port centres (such as Gdańsk, Gdynia and Szczecin) and those that appear in border zones have privileged position. It is not, however, entirely settled since e.g. the Ukrainian consulate situated in Gdansk has no such a post in more appropriate place, like Lublin or Rzeszów. On assessing a power centre, the biggest insurance company on the Polish market - PZU, which departments and other posts branches are located in over 400 places, was taken into consideration. For this reason, only towns with these institutions' head offices were to assess the centre's importance.

Another group of four criterion is spatial diversity of the judiciary centres. As the number of district courts includes

over 290 cities distinguishing cities with head office of regional courts was accepted as the first criterion of this group.

Due to complicated divisions of regional courts structure, partly including labour, social insurance and economic courts as well as departments of registers and deposits, it is extremely difficult to compare centres on regional courts level. Next two divisions of the judiciary (courts of appeal and garrison), similarly to out-of-town NSA (General Administrative Court) departments, significantly promote over-regional centres which need to be distinguished in this study. Additionally, garrison courts were helpful in distinguishing those centres on the operation territory of which follows concentration of military units. However, the importance and significance of Gdynia have been artificially strengthened at the cost of Gdańsk and Zielona Góra, on the other hand, though, it allows to assess these centres' influence on the military structures. If there were no military units' significant concentrations in the western part of the country, yet there would not have been a need to appoint out-of-town department of garrison court in Poznań with a head office in Zielona Góra.

As for barrister courts that double the number of courts of appeal, they have enabled to determine places of barrister councils headquarters, appointed with government institutions' consent, however, as a result of self-organisation of barrister councils they exemplify a sign of strong influence of societies which are not connected with the justice department structures. The last two divisions result from considering the higher education influence as a factor that moulds the importance and significance of a centre. The first one divides places into campuses and the others. Its choice results from the significant number of students that gained education at universities (30% of all the students in the country have studied at thirteen universities in this academic year). Another reason for choosing this criterion is the possibility of free studies which for some students poses the main factor when thinking about taking up studies. Polytechnics, however, could also be taken into consideration since, in financial respect, they fulfil the same criterion as universities but the number of students at this kind of college is smaller and they definitely offer profiled majors. As for

pedagogical, medical and other state colleges they cannot play a role of significant academic centre themselves as the number of students is not big enough. Also it would be hard to except the criterion of economic colleges since part of them are private colleges collecting high tuition fees. The second criterion, compensating to a large degree weak points of the first one, is taking into consideration places with high schools. However, for the sake of numerous such centres only these were chosen which were at the 'best colleges' list published in the 'Wprost' ( Polish political weekly magazine ) colleges ranking.

After considering the above-mentioned criterion, a ranking differentiating seventy-seven cities into four categories that fulfil the criterion has been drawn up. Over-regional centres include the first eleven cities which appeared for more than fifteen among twenty accepted criterion. They include in alphabetical order: Białystok, Cracow, Gdańsk, Katowice, Łódź, Lublin, Olsztyn, Poznań, Szczecin, Warsaw and Wrocław. Except for Olsztyn they are the biggest cities of the country. If the role and significance of Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań and Wrocław are undisputed, then lower place of Gdańsk results from taking over part of them by Gdynia.

Weaker position of Łódź, however, results from the concentration of functions in the nearby Warsaw with which Łódź is not able to compete in respect of the power centre's size. The same situation is shared by Katowice with reference to Cracow what explains lower by two points position of the city. However, increased position of Olsztyn - the smallest place of this group is quite significant. Its function results from lack of any significant centres in this part of the country; similarly, to some extent, compared to other centres the significance of Lublin or Białystok which fulfil power centre's function only in the east, being reduced by the strong Warsaw influence. In these towns AWS and SLD, with insignificant UW participation, wield the power. However, in Opole , Lublin and Warsaw despite AWS winning the biggest number of seats the power was taken over by SLD and PSL coalition which appoint their representatives to the community health centre's councils. It seems interesting that along with centre's rank drop SLD, winning seats in council elections, increases its influence.

It would be also interesting to determine the state division into certain parties' range of influence, however, rapid drop in electorate's support for AWS and UW coalition enables to carry out such an analysis a year after the reform was introduced. It is even more difficult as the voters are facing next-year parliamentary and presidential elections preceded by a campaign, thus two great election campaigns will certainly influence some of electorate's preferences.

Another eleven cities are numbered among the second group of over-regional centres. Presented in alphabetical order they include: Bydgoszcz, Częstochowa, Kielce, Koszalin, Opole, Płock, Radom, Rzeszów, Siedlce, Toruń and Zielona Góra. They fulfil the function of the second category power centres in a natural way. Six provincial capitals among them suggest that either a new territorial state division into ten or eleven big provinces should have been introduced in 1999 or that on increasing the number of units demands of the following eleven cities inhabitants should be consequently satisfied and twenty or twenty-one medium-size regions should be formed. Unfortunately, a compromise solution was chosen and it is hard to answer why a province with a capital in Koszalin or Częstochowa administering similar potential and situated in the same power centres group as Kielce and Opole was not brought into life.

Six cities of this group owe their power range, to some extent, to the latest decisions made on the base of political entertainment since they received an additional point for location of provincial seats which eventually increased their importance and significance. Another five cities are centres of alternative power coming in the sphere between first-degree over-regional power centres. For example, Opole between Katowice and Wrocław, Radom between Kielce and Warsaw and Częstochowa between Łódź and Cracow. Rzeszów is located in the weakening influence sphere of both Lublin and Cracow; similarly Zielona Góra and Siedlce among the nearest big centres. Absent in this group Gorzów Wielkopolski, the only provincial capital classified in a lower category, is an example of overestimating city's rank as a power centre that has no reflection in reality.

In the third group there are as many as twenty-one centres that could be described either as third-rate over-

regional power centres or as first-rate local power centres. They are somehow 'suspended' as despite their aspirations they do not fulfil the over-regional power centre function yet but with their size, economic potential and the number of functions they have exceeded the function of local and over-regional power centre. Except for Gdynia and Gliwice all of them were recognised as provincial capitals in 1975 and some of them are centres that used to fulfil administrative functions in the times of the first Polish dynasty reign ( Kalisz, Przemyśl, Elbląg, Sandomierz, Legnica, Piotrków Trybunalski, Sieradz, Słupsk and Włocławek ). They are the best example of local power centres in which most of decisions of local significance were made up. Among them is Gorzów Wielkopolski whose provincial centre importance is weakened by its location between Szczecin and Poznań – two big over-regional power centres that prevent its development as well as fulfilling over-regional functions.

The thirty-three remaining centres from the considered ranking are included since they fulfilled at least one of the chosen criterion. However, only do they fulfil local power centres function, some of them even that of the biggest but administrative unit's power.

Cities	A	B	E	I	K	L	N	T
1. Biała Podlaska			+					+
2. Bogatynia					+	+		
3. Chełmno	+		+					
4. Drohiczyn	+			+				
5. Jelenia Góra			+				+	
6. Konin			+				+	
7. Ostrołęka			+				+	
8. Skierniewice			+				+	
9. Tarnobrzeg			+				+	
10. Zamość			+				+	
11. Bytom								+
12. Chełm			+					
13. Chrzanów								+
14. Ciechanów			+					
15. Dębica					+			
16. Jaworzno					+			

17.Kwidzyn					+			
18.Lubaczów				+				
19.Łęczyca	+							
20.łowicz								+
21.Malbork	+							
22.Małogoszcz					+			
23.Miechów		+						
24.Mysłowice								+
25.Myślenice					+			
26.Olecko								+
27.Ostrowiec Święt.								+
28.Pułtusk								+
29.Stargard Gd.					+			
30.Świdnica							+	
31.Świecie					+			
32.Tarnowo Podgór.					+			
33.Zaborów					+			
34.Żywiec					+			

Table 1. Towns and administrative unit centres included in the 'Centres of over-regional significance' ranking

A – provincial capitals of the Republic of Poland and neighbouring countries in 1700 (on the present territory of Poland )

B – administrative towns of provincial capital rank in 1807-1914

E – provincial capitals in 1975

I – towns with dioceses and archdioceses headquarters in 1990

K- towns with the biggest institutions with net profit of over 50 million zloty from the '500' list

L – towns with bank headquarters

N – towns with district courts headquarters in 1999

T – towns with high school headquarters from the 'Wprost' 'colleges ranking'

Source: Authors study

From the comparison of the criteria, that the remaining cities taken under consideration meet, concludes that, in the last group - 12 out of 34 cities lack previously considered divisions in 20 kinds of classification. Those cities were not the centres of power during the period between the world wars or



even after the reform from 1950. They have also never been among the cities of central power, nor among any propositions from the government referring to the country's administrative division change. None of them has ever become archbishop's abode. The regional courts function in most of them, in some of them, however - the territorial courts, and the lack any higher instance courts or military judicature. Nevertheless, not universities but at least high schools exist there.

There are nine capitals of the provinces (from the country's division from 1975) among them, what proves that these particular nine cities shouldn't be included in the very last country's division. They only meet one or two criteria out of chosen 20, as far as a lower range of a local centre of power is concerned. The most common criterion that was crucial in regarding them was the decision about establishing the new university or localisation the company bringing net profits over 50 milliard zlotys. Those centres will surely take the places falling by right for them only when the general criteria for the city-centres of district power are assumed.

### **Conclusion**

Ten criteria were taken under consideration to estimate the variability of the centres of district power, similarly as in case of the centres of power with over-regional meaning. Among all of the district centres of power, 22 functioning as over-regional power's centres, were excluded. For all the remaining ones, the first criterion to meet to become the local centre of power, was to have 30.000 inhabitants having permanent address there. The other three more criteria were connected to having now or during the times of the II Polish Republic, the regional or territorial judicial power. The next criterion was having now or having had in the past (division from 1975), the function of the governmental administration centre in the particular region. The sixth criterion bases itself on estimating the power and meaning of the specific administrative district as a distinguishing power centre in voivodeship; this criterion results from the analysis done in the part of this project, revolving the centres of administrative districts in the new administrative division. Existing of the PZU (Polish Insurance Institution) inspectorate was the next

criterion. Then the dioceses' centres were taken into account. The last two criteria indicate the nobility the centre as a city with an enterprise's abode, giving the profits, from the list of "500" biggest business (elaborated by the Polish magazine "Politics"). The very last criterion refers to an educational influence of the centre; where all the cities having at least one university were taken into account. The sum of total amount of points is shown in the last column, assuming that one point is given for each compliance of the function. In order to arrange the table of administrative districts, all land districts were eliminated; which by the way have their city equivalents and all of the cities that enter the composition of 22 cities with over-regional importance.

Among 305 administrative districts' capitals, excluding land districts by city's administrative districts and 22 largest centres, only 36 cities meet the five or even more previously chosen criteria and are decisive centres of local power with widest range and the intensity of actions. There are 28 former capitals of provinces among them and also 7 strong urban agglomerates (that did not in fact become the capitals of province, because there were bigger centres around them). Gdynia forms Tri-City together with Gdańsk and Sopot, Gliwice and Sosnowiec are situated in the sphere of action of Katowice, Gniezno lies too close to Poznań, Jasło between Rzeszów and Cracow and not too far from Krosno and Tarnów, Kołobrzeg much too close to Koszalin, what is more negative for this city an Starogard Szczeciński as well- it is limited by Szczecin's influence. Żywiec, however, is located too near to Bielsko-Biała, which during the industrial development in XIX c. Completely dominated the old centre of power. Except from Żywiec, Kołobrzeg, Jasło and Gniezno, the rest of the centres are or somehow could be the city's administrative districts. They have more than 30.000 inhabitants are have regional courts. Most of them have over-local function as territorial courts. Almost all of them dominate as economic centres, with reference to a single inhabitant's income in his province.

There are dioceses' abodes in half of them, and in 3 cases - the abodes of metropoly of Roman-catholic church (Częstochowa, Gniezno and Przemyśl). The big part of them is in a great degree financially independent from governmental grant-in-aid and subsidies, mainly due to relatively high

percentage of personal incomes and numerous firms regularly enriching particular districts' budgets. All of the centres hold huge chances of being transformed into centres of over-local and over-regional importance, comparable to those second dignity, over-regional centres. Therefore appraising the results of the elections to the Polish Sejm in 1997, one can easily notice that AWS and SLD (Polish leading political parties), shared the number of the seats in the Parliament, what monopolised the Polish political scenery. AWS decidedly has won in the southern and eastern Poland, SLD by contrast has won in the western and northern parts of Poland.

There are 127 cities from administrative districts are in the next group that meet one to four chose criteria. They can be specified as local centres of particular district's power centres. Their development will be considerably connected with the changes that take place in the whole region, but the amount of money given from the national budget is much too little to make independent politics. Those cities, where numerous trading companies function, especially those with the foreign capital, are in much better situation.

In the second group of the centres of administrative districts' power, which meet from 2 to 4 criteria, most of the cities are of high economic and social potential and, in addition, they develop nearby bigger centres. In this particular group only Świdnica gained a point for having territorial court' abode, and this qualifies as an exception, because lawyer counsel is neighbouring Wałbrzych. Also Ciechanów obtained the statutes of capital of province after administrative division from 1975. None of the cities from the group does not have the abode of PZU (Polish Insurance Institution), what basically means neighbourhood with a bigger city with the insurance inspectorate, and, on the other hand, some of the cities have a weak insurance market not requiring forming a local insurance companies' branches. It also seems interesting that there are Roman-catholic bishop' abodes in four cities from the group. In fact, Lubaczów's case results from historical past of the city and corrected somehow by forming a diocese in that area. Łowicz, which lies between Warsaw and Łódź, can be explained the same way, however, the location of Elk and Sandomierz (having in mind that Tarnobrzeg and Suwałki could have been chosen) seems to be motivated by willingness

to enlarging the zone of ascendancy, what appears to be much easier in a smaller centre than in a large one (localisation of the diocese's abode in Sandomierz may also result from historical reasons).

Practically thinking, what definitely decided on affiliation to the group of centres of power was the number of inhabitants, the regional court's abode and the powerful position of the administrative district in the province (the number of inhabitants, the area, personal income, the whole administrative district's income). The local centres' authorities probably put a lot of effort into encouraging the investors, what proves the fact of relatively high contribution of companies' from the list of 500 biggest enterprises in the country. Education yet is distinctly weakly developed. Only four centres, Chrzanów, Łowicz, Mysłowice and Pułtusk gained points for higher education institutes placed on very good positions in the ranking list.

In the next group of cities from administrative districts, are those centres meeting one or even none of the chosen criteria. It appears then that so much as 144 administrative districts were formed mainly due to the pressure of local political environments, not thanks to its significant character. The centres listed below have chances of further development thanks to attracting capital investments or something that would make the city or the administrative district interesting in any meaning, like tourism, a sanatorium, farming products' market, big foreign investments; in any other case majority of them will be forced to using the subventions and grants-in-aid from the government.

It would be very interesting to represent a map of the country without including those mentioned 144 centres and trying to carry out a segmentation into provinces. In such a situation, there would most probably have never come into being half of the provinces that exist now, among them: świętokrzyskie, lubuskie, kujawsko-pomorskie and opolskie districts. On the other side, those provinces that exist, would be reinforced, at least as their rank and significance is concerned; joining the administrative districts' centres (just like in olecko-gołdapski, czarnkowsko-trzcianecki districts) would eliminate those glaring disproportion between them and would allow to realise the tasks given to the districts in the

statue of local authorities. The liquidation of land districts lying by small urban centres and 144 weak land districts would reduce the number of administrative districts' centres to about 200-210, what would probably set an optimal number of administrative districts in Poland's case.

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