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## **ARE THERE RURAL AREAS IN THE WARSAW METROPOLITAN AREA? AN ATTEMPT TO ANSWER THE QUESTION BASE ON THE DEGREE OF URBANISATION (DEGURBA)**

*CZY OBSZAR METROPOLITALNY WARSZAWY OBEJMUJE OBSZARY WIEJSKIE?  
PRÓBA ODPOWIEDZI NA PODSTAWIE STOPNIA URBANIZACJI DEGURBA*

**Key words:** Warsaw Metropolitan Area, rural areas, DEGURBA, integrated territorial investment

*Słowa kluczowe:* warszawski obszar metropolitalny, obszary wiejskie, DEGURBA, zintegrowane inwestycje terytorialne

**Abstract.** Significant transformation processes have been taking place on rural areas, especially those close to big cities. Some communes, which are still described as rural ones, can be a part of functional metropolitan regions. The aim of the study was to verify if such a situation takes place in the case of the Warsaw Metropolitan Area. The study showed that there are some rural communes, according to the DEGURBA methodology, included in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area; some of them also joined a mechanism of the Warsaw Integrated Territorial Investment. Participation in this mechanism will allow them to develop their potential in a way coherent with the development path of the whole Warsaw metropolitan region.

### **Introduction**

Rural areas have been transforming their functions nowadays. It can be seen especially near big cities, which have been developing their ranges of influence. Territories used previously for agricultural production, near cities especially fruit and vegetable production, are used or planned to use for example for housing purposes or services, for example storage and logistic services. It is partly a result of urban sprawl. This phenomenon has a lot of definition. Even inside academia, it represents different concepts depending on the discipline: some focus on its social aspects, other researchers see it as the outcome of free market choices, while yet others identify it as an environmental threat [Arribas-Bela et al. 2011]. However, one of the simplest definition adopted to research the case of Leipzig (Germany) assumes that urban sprawl means the conversion of non-urban into urban land. This land-use change on the other hand refers to any kind of conversion of land uses [Haase, Nuissl 2007]. In Poland, as in the wider world, the spatial development of cities and urban sprawl have only really become subjects of more-numerous studies – and a great deal of academic debate – in the last few years [Degórska 2012].

A core city is natural starting point for urban sprawl analyses. However, in this study the analysis is intended to begin from a perspective of territories, which are defined as rural ones according to the degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA). Undoubtedly, they will face a pressure of land-use transformation but these changes can bring some positive results like for example additional financial resources within the mechanisms of integrated territorial investment planned for the period 2014-2020 [*Integrated Territorial... 2014*].

### **Material and methods**

The aim of the paper is to identify if the Warsaw Metropolitan Area includes any municipalities categorized as rural according to the degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA) and then to display which of them can profit from the mechanism of integrated territorial investment. To discuss this issues it is necessary to refer to the definition of the Warsaw Metropolitan Area as well as to basic



Figure 1. Warsaw Metropolitan Area in 2013  
*Rysunek 1. Obszar Metropolitalny Warszawy w 2013 roku*  
 Source/Źródło: [Obszar Metropolitalny... 2015]

concepts of the degree of urbanisation (DEGURBA).

The Warsaw Metropolitan Area had been defined by the Mazovian Office for Regional Planning in Warsaw (fig. 1). Delimitation of this area included such aspects as: development of the area and communes' policy within this field, social and economic issues, transportation connections, technical infrastructure, public investment and communes' attitude towards affiliation with the Warsaw Metropolitan Area<sup>1</sup>. The Warsaw Metropolitan Area consists of 72 local government units (communes) covering a total of 6206 square kilometres [Urząd Statystyczny w Warszawie 2015].

For a short introduction of the DEGURBA methodology it is

necessary to point out that according to the Eurostat typology there were defined [Eurostat 2015]:

- high-density cluster (or city centre): contiguous grid cells of 1km<sup>2</sup> with a density of at least 1 500 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> and a minimum population of 50 000;
- urban clusters: clusters of contiguous grid cells of 1km<sup>2</sup> with a density of at least 300 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup> and a minimum population of 5000;
- rural grid cells: grid cells outside urban clusters.

The degree of urbanisation creates a three-way classification of LAU2s<sup>2</sup> as follows:

- 1) densely populated area (alternate name: cities or large urban area): at least 50% lives in high-density clusters,
- 2) intermediate density area (alternate name: towns and suburbs or small urban area): less than 50% of the population lives in rural grid cells and less than 50% lives in a high-density cluster,
- 3) thinly populated area (alternate name: rural area): more than 50% of the population lives in rural grid cells.

The latest classification for DEGURBA is accessible for the year 2012 [Eurostat 2015] so this one was used as a reference.

### **Rural areas in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area and the mechanism of Integrated Territorial Investment**

As it was mentioned the Warsaw Metropolitan Area includes 72 communes. Only one of them, Warsaw, was classified according to DEGURBA as a city, which is very obvious. Among the rest of 71, 41 was classified as intermediate density area, so they can be described as Warsaw suburbs or towns. The rest, so 30 commune are rural according to this approach (tab. 1). That illustrates the fact that the Warsaw Metropolitan area includes also territories defined as rural ones. It is very probably that they will develop rather for different functions than agricultural or food production. Then, the question is: if development of these territories can be supported by public funding differ-

<sup>1</sup> This delimitation was approved by: Wojewódzka Komisja Urbanistyczno-Architektoniczna (October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2005), Komisja Strategii Rozwoju Regionalnego i Zagospodarowania Przestrzennego (October 10<sup>th</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005) and the Board of Mazowieckie Voivodship (January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2006)

<sup>2</sup> Local administrative units level 2, which in Poland is the level of communes.

ent than this directed traditionally for rural areas, for example within the rural development policy (the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy). Here we can refer to integrated territorial investment planned in the period 2014-2020 as a part of the cohesion policy. The instrument of the Integrated Territorial Investment (ITI) contributed to integration of Warsaw and neighboring communes, which declared their willingness to implementation of common activities. An agreement on the Warsaw ITI was signed by 40 communes, including Warsaw (tab. 1). The Warsaw ITI assumes three priorities [Urząd Miasta Stołecznego Warszawy 2015]:

- improvement of the accessibility of public services: information, education and services for inhabitants (for example: e-services, care services for children),
- development of economic relations, including promotion of the economy, investment territories and human capital,
- improvement of space quality, including transport as well as environmental and cultural conditions.

Figure 2. Communes in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area according to their character in DEGURBA classification and participation in the Warsaw ITI

*Rysunek 2. Gminy warszawskiego obszaru metropolitalnego według klasyfikacji DEGURBA i uczestnictwa w Zintegrowanych Inwestycjach Terytorialnych*

Source: see tab. 1

Źródło: jak w tab. 1

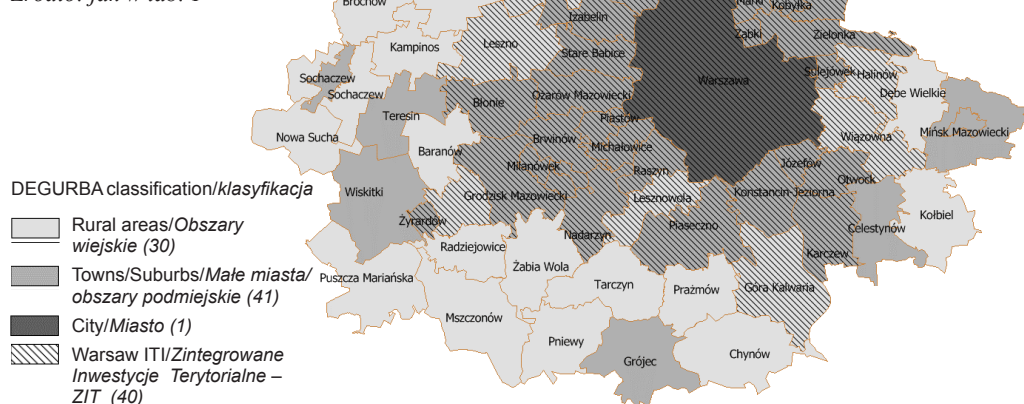


Table 1. Number of communes in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area according to their character in DEGURBA classification and participation in the Warsaw ITI

*Tabela 1. Liczba gmin obszaru metropolitalnego Warszawy według klasyfikacji DEGURBA i uczestnictwa w Zintegrowanych Inwestycjach Terytorialnych*

DEGURBA	Warsaw ITI / <i>Zintegrowane Inwestycje Terytorialne (ZIT)</i>		
	participating/ <i>uczestniczące</i>	non-participating/ <i>nieuczestniczące</i>	total/ <i>razem</i>
City/ <i>Miasto</i>	1	0	1
Towns/Suburbs/ <i>Małe miasta/obszary podmiejskie</i>	31	10	41
Rural areas/ <i>Obszary wiejskie</i>	8	22	30
Total/ <i>Razem</i>	40	32	72

Source: own study based on DEGURBA classification [Correspondence table.... 2015] and [Strategia Zintegrowanych... 2015]

Źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie klasyfikacji DEGURBA [Correspondence table.... 2015] i [Strategia Zintegrowanych... 2015]

There is a plan of using 165.8 million euro (about 700 million zlotys) for implementation of activities planned within the Warsaw ITI. They will come from the Regional Operational Programme of Mazovia 2014-2020 as well as other programmes managed on the national level<sup>3</sup>.

Coming back to considerations on a character of communes included in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area (rural or non-rural), it should be checked if any communes defined as rural joined the Warsaw ITI (tab. 1, fig. 2). As it could be seen at the figure 2., a territory covered by the Warsaw ITI is quite coherent. Together with communes classified as suburbs basing on DEGURBA, there are 8 communes of rural character within the Warsaw ITI. All communes participating in the Warsaw ITI will be able to benefit from this mechanism, although it is very important to those classified as rural. The mechanism will open them a door for cooperation with considerably more powerful city authorities – the Warsaw self-government. However, some of these communes have been already one of the most developed in the whole Mazovia region, for example Lesznowola [Drejerska et al. 2014].

### Conclusions

A discussion on a character of different territories, their rurality or urban character can be an interesting topic for academicians. As a result, there exist various concepts and definitions what areas can be described as rural. From the practical point of view, it seems to be important how different instruments of development policy can be applied to support different territories, including these rural ones.

The approach presented in the paper was based on communes, as in the Polish conditions their self-authorities are responsible for a wide range of public services. The study showed that there are some rural communes, according to the DEGURBA methodology, included in the Warsaw Metropolitan Area. Some of them accessed to the mechanism of the Warsaw Integrated Territorial Investment. Participation in this mechanism will allow them to develop their potential in a way coherent with the development path of the whole Warsaw metropolitan region. However, it will be also a challenge for their self-authorities to cooperate with authorities of the largest city in Poland although it can bring a lot of benefits for their inhabitants. On the other hand, there is a question about support of development in other communes of the Warsaw Metropolitan Area, which are not included the Warsaw ITI. Majority of them is classified as rural areas (22 out of 32 communes). Their authorities will have to look for different funding of their development plans.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://omw.um.warszawa.pl/m-st-warszawa-wystepuje-w-nowej-roli-jako-instytucja-posredniczaca-ds-zit/> (10.06.2015)

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### ***Streszczenie***

*Obszary wiejskie, szczególnie położone w pobliżu dużych miast, podlegają znaczącym zmianom. Niektóre z nich stają się nawet częścią funkcjonalnych regionów metropolitalnych. Celem opracowania było zweryfikowanie czy taka sytuacja ma miejsce w obszarze metropolitalnym Warszawy. Wyniki wskazały, że również gminy wiejskie, bazując na metodologii DEGURBA, wchodzą w skład obszaru metropolitalnego Warszawy, a niektóre z nich przyłączyły się również do mechanizmu zintegrowanych inwestycji terytorialnych. Uczestnictwo w nim pozwoli na wykorzystanie potencjałów w kierunku spójnym ze ścieżką rozwojową całego regionu metropolitalnego.*

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