

Doctoral dissertation summary

Zuzanna Neuve-Église

“Constructing the metropolis. Between the institution and the space of social narrative – the example of the GZM Metropolis”

The dissertation focuses on the representation of the process of metropolisation in the Silesian voivodeship in the local press discourse between 2007 and 2018, as well as on the meaning that this discourse can have in creating the *lived space* (Frémont 1976).

Attempts at adjusting local authority entities to contemporary urban space transformations induced by globalisation form the context of the conducted studies. In Poland, they turned into a debate on metropolitan reform leading to the regulation of the status of metropolitan areas, focused on providing these functional entities with favourable conditions for development by a stable source of financing and efficient tools of management. The Silesian voivodeship, where the first metropolitan union was legally introduced in 2017 after many years of efforts, became the arena of discussions and changes in metropolitan policies.

The collected empirical data cover press publications and readers' comments from two popular regional newspapers – “Dziennik Zachodni” and “Gazeta Wyborcza” (local supplement Katowice) – which are widely read and quoted by other media sources (according to the Institute of Media Monitoring). For the local community, they constitute one of the fundamental sources of information about the region. The sources were selected, having in mind the perspective of shaping inhabitants' collective imagination, based on the media image of the metropolis and the potential of creating the lived space. The analysed period was between 2007-2018, when the institution of metropolitan management was known as the Upper-Silesian Metropolitan Union and replaced by the GZM Metropolis on the 1st of July 2017.

The research goal of this dissertation is situated on two levels. On the one hand, on a descriptive level, it is focused on registering and recreating the press discourse on the metropolisation process, presenting its dynamics, subjects and main threads. On the other hand, there was a cognitive objective of describing the contents of the identified groups and threads forming the media image of the metropolis. Moreover, the study aimed to identify the ways of representing the metropolis in the dominant threads and to indicate framing tools and their

functions, especially those that could have an influence on the integration of different level politicians and citizens in actions for the common good of the metropolitan area.

In the thesis, it is assumed that the metropolisation process occurring in the material sphere can also be analysed within the symbolic sphere – of discourse and mass communication – which has a potential impact on the collective image of the metropolis. Press discourse imposes specific meanings on the social space and values contained in images which represent the linguistically constructed reality negotiated through rational or emotional arguments. These images constitute social knowledge about the metropolisation process. Statements about different aspects of the functioning of a complex phenomenon of the metropolis were viewed as an attempt to give meaning to events concerning the metropolitan sphere through storytelling practices – with words and images consolidated in the language (Rosner 2003: 27).

The theoretical part of the dissertation focused on the presentation of the central notions and concepts crucial for the topic, that is, the metropolis, the metropolitan area and the range of the metropolisation phenomenon, the social space and mechanisms creating it as well as the discourse and social representations. In this part, the historical context of the formation of the metropolitan area and its administrative institutions in the Silesian voivodeship, along with Silesia-Zagłębie relations, were also illustrated.

The methodological chapter presents the research problem, aims and questions, as well as discusses data sources, sample selection, research methods and techniques, and observations from the pilot study of strategic documents of the GZM municipalities. The analytical chapter was divided into three parts, each referring to a given methodological orientation. The utilised model has a Chinese box structure. Therefore, the results of consecutive analytical parts complement each other. The first subchapter aims to describe the results of quantitative content analysis, presenting the duration and intensification periods of the discourse, its voices and the placement of the metropolitan topic in the material (its exposition). Moreover, the conducted frequency and topic analysis allowed to identify the main threads shaping the notion of metropolisation and to illustrate their fluctuation in the analysed period. In the second part, issues forming the content of the presented themes concerning the metropolisation process in the Silesian voivodeship are described (through qualitative content analysis). The distinction made in the analysis between journalist and non-journalist texts, such as the readers' reactions to the discourse of symbolic elites, allowed to formulate conclusions on how the readers received the image of the metropolis created by journalists. The third part focused on the power of persuasion of texts as an essential aspect of influencing the readers' (region inhabitants') perception of the issue of metropolisation in the Silesian voivodeship. Two main frames,

constituting patterns of the representation of the metropolis as an institution, were distinguished – the chance frame and conflict frame. Furthermore, special discursive techniques and linguistic means (e.g. metaphors, comparisons, examples) were identified as framing tools used by the authors of press articles. Their functions were also described: defining problems (indicating causes and consequences), formulating moral judgements, as well as suggesting solutions and motivating readers to act and change (Gamson, Modigliani 1989; Entman 1993).

The thesis presents the results of the original research. It is based on content analysis and frame analysis, touching upon the notion of representing the metropolisation process in the Silesian voivodeship through media message in “Dziennik Zachodni” and “Gazeta Wyborcza”. Conclusions of the research performed pertain to the deliberations about the possibility of shaping collective images and, in a long-term perspective, a new level of identification influenced by changes connected to globalisation and concerning the formation of territorial-administrative structures on the metropolitan level. The research highlighted the existence of alternative images of the metropolis as the administrative institution of the metropolitan area and their transformation into a positive picture in the studied period. This picture has become a creative expression of working through tensions and conflicts during the metropolisation process in the institutional dimension. Different values attached to images in the studied period resulted from the division of the notion of the metropolis into the idea and its practical realisation, most often perceived negatively. Conclusions prove that the local press played an important role not only as a potential tool in shaping the collective consciousness of the metropolisation process, but also as an important participant in that process and the catalyst of changes. These studies inspire to conduct further analysis concerning the possibility and conditions for shaping metropolitan citizenship.