

TRADITION AND HISTORICAL CONTINUITY OF ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS IN THE FORMER PROVINCIAL CITIES IN POLAND

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Abstract: The tradition of the function of an administrative center in terms of historical background on the various territorial divisions is essential for understanding the formation of the culture of the organization and management of the city, for making its development and for creating a sense of civic identity. These factors may condition the socio-economic development and the functioning of the city despite the loss of prestigious positions in certain historical periods. The speech will discuss the historical conditions and the tradition of performing administrative functions according to its rank in the currently degraded provincial cities. Retrospective analysis will address the 31 urban centers, since their formal establishment. The aim of the study is to identify the differences and similarities of the former provincial cities by the time the highest performing administrative functions and administrative functions according to the rank of the center in a historical perspective. Consequently, the attempt is made to identify opportunities for further development of these degraded administratively cities due to the factor of administrative traditions.

Key words: administrative function, historical rank administratibe functions, relegated cities, Poland

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INTRODUCTION

The administrative function in political and historical geography is incorporated into scientific consideration as a socio-political factor in the concepts of territorial divisions and structuring of power, and now the role of local government in shaping the civil society with the criticism of local government weakening is also emphasized (Koter 1996; Koter, Liszewski, Suliborski 1996; Eberhard 1997; Bagdziński, Szczepkowski 1998; Stasiak 1999, Heffner, Rykała 1999, Hopfer, Suchta, Żebrowski 1999, Kaczmarek 2012, Wendt 2007).

However, there is current research in geography emphasizing the role of administrative functions in social and economic development of settlement

units. Many researchers on the basis of empirical research and theoretical considerations recognizes that administrative functions stimulate the socio-economic development (Dziewoński, Jerczyński 1971, Dutkowski 2006, Wendt 2001). It is assumed that the higher the position of the city in the administrative hierarchy, the more favorable conditions for development it has in relation to the city of similar size, but deprived of administrative functions (Kaczmarek 1992). The hierarchical features in this sense are quite heavily accentuated. The important role that the greater decisiveness and thus - the power (Kaczmarek 1996; Wendt 2001, 2007) manifested in major development opportunities other than the administrative functions of the city. In relation to the different sizes of settlements, the administrative functionality therefore has a different impact on their development. In this sense, the importance of stability and historicity of the administrative functions is also highlighted (Górka 1992; Węclawowicz 1992), and especially – the central functions. Similarly, the strong role of supra-local centers in the outermost regions was pointed out by E. Rydz (1990). He defined the administrative function as an important field of stimulating the development of other urban functions, including economic and a wide range of social functions in the context of the impact on the surrounding area, understood as a network of socio-economic relations. Some researchers verify this thesis, referring to the negative effects of the loss of the prestige administrative functions, which was related to the degradation of the rank of an administrative center, but also with the increase of economic and social problems and economic (Kupiec 1992; Jasiulewicz 2001; Szwichtenberg 2002). A completely different kind of hypothesis in their deliberations about the development of Łódź formulated S. Liszewski and A. Wolaniuk (1992). They demonstrated that the economic development of the city took place without a significant share of administrative functions, and even historically, these functions were reluctant to be located by the structure of administrative power in this city. The industrial function was the deciding development factor. The demographic and economic development of the city, as a consequence, forced the placement in it the administrative function of the level corresponding to the size of the city, which was a peculiar “inversion of urban functions.”

A similar view was expressed by A. Jelonek (1992), claiming that from a historical point of view, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there were often cases of relocation of administration headquarters (particularly the central ones) to the centers of favorable transportation position, with well developing, thanks to this, industry and crafts. Rarely, however, the significant administrative functions were located in the less developed cities or cities built all over again.

An example of the former provincial cities in Poland shows that there is still political decision-making hierarchy, which is more important than social, economic, or historical justification. As a consequence of such decisions, the status of provincial cities in 1975 was received by cities that had not have so far any tradition of performing important administrative functions. After 23 years, they have lost their prestigious status. Was such a move justified from a historical point of view? The answer to this question is partly the purpose of this publication.

In Poland after World War II, the introduction of new administrative divisions has become a necessity, as never before Poland did not exist in the

current boundaries. In the first years after the war due to the lack of definitive findings as to the state border, the pre-war structure of administrative authorities were restored, and the northern and western lands adopted the common name of the Regained Territories areas. In the history of administrative divisions in Poland, the most important reform started 14th March 1945, when the Regained Territories were divided into 4 districts, acting the beginnings of new provinces (Gawryszewski 2005; Szymańska 2015).

Since that time, there have been many changes in the administrative division of the country. From the point of view of development of the highest level administrative functions, there were six major changes. The first change was made on April 6, 1945, when new Gdańsk province was separated from the structures of Pomeranian province with capital city of Gdańsk. At the same time, capital of the Pomeranian province was moved from Toruń to Bydgoszcz. At that moment, there were 10 provincial cities in Poland. More than a year later, on June 28, 1946, the existing administrative division of the country was corrected. Three new provinces were established in the area of the Recovered Territories: Olsztyn, Szczecin, and Wrocław, and boundaries of others were changed. Eventually, 14 provinces and 2 separated cities with the rights of provincial cities (Warsaw, Łódź) were proclaimed. The next reform concerned the changes in areas of the Recovered Territories. On July 6, 1950, three new provinces were created, while establishing Koszalin and Opole as the provincial cities. At this point, Poland consisted of 17 provincial cities and 2 separated cities with the rights of provincial cities. In 1957, another change was made by administrative extracting of additional 3 cities and giving them the status of provinces. The administrative structure developed and gave greater powers to 5 cities having higher status than the capital of the province. This relatively stable state of administrative division at the highest level was maintained until 1975. In this year, the three-level administrative division of the country was abolished. Counties were abolished and municipality was introduced as the basic unit of the local division, while province became the second level. There have been a large fragmentation of the provincial structures by establishing 49 provinces. As a result of this reform, 32 new city acquired the status of provincial cities. This organizational structure lasted for 23 years. Since January 1, 1999, the three-level territorial division of the country was restored, establishing 16 provinces, 380 counties (including 66 cities with the rights of county). Of the 49 provincial cities, 18 did not lose their rank (two provinces maintained double capitals: Kujawsko-Pomorskie - Bydgoszcz and Toruń, Lubuskie - Gorzów Wielkopolski and Zielona Góra), while 31 have been degraded to the cities with functions of the district level (figure 1).

The article analyzes cities, that as a result of recent Polish administrative reform of 1999, lost their important administrative functions of the first level, i.e. provincial city functions. These cities are a diverse collection in terms of historical continuity of performed administrative functions. Among them, there are those that have a rich tradition of acting as regional centers and such that obtained these functions in 1975. Nevertheless, the situation of ennoblement to an important regional center was an important development impulse and, in a sense, the historic decision shaping contemporary territorial identity of residents of many of these cities.

The objective of the analysis was to determine the traditions and continuity of administrative functions from the moment of obtaining municipal

rights by the city to the present, in the context of historical conditions and validity of their functions. The aim of the study was to indicate the diversity of a set of degraded cities, their typology according to the criterion of administrative traditions length, rank of the performed administrative functions, and continuity of the highest rank functions. The publication aims to discuss the role the historical factor may play in a development of the city and formation of its territorial identity, despite the loss of prestigious positions in certain historical periods.

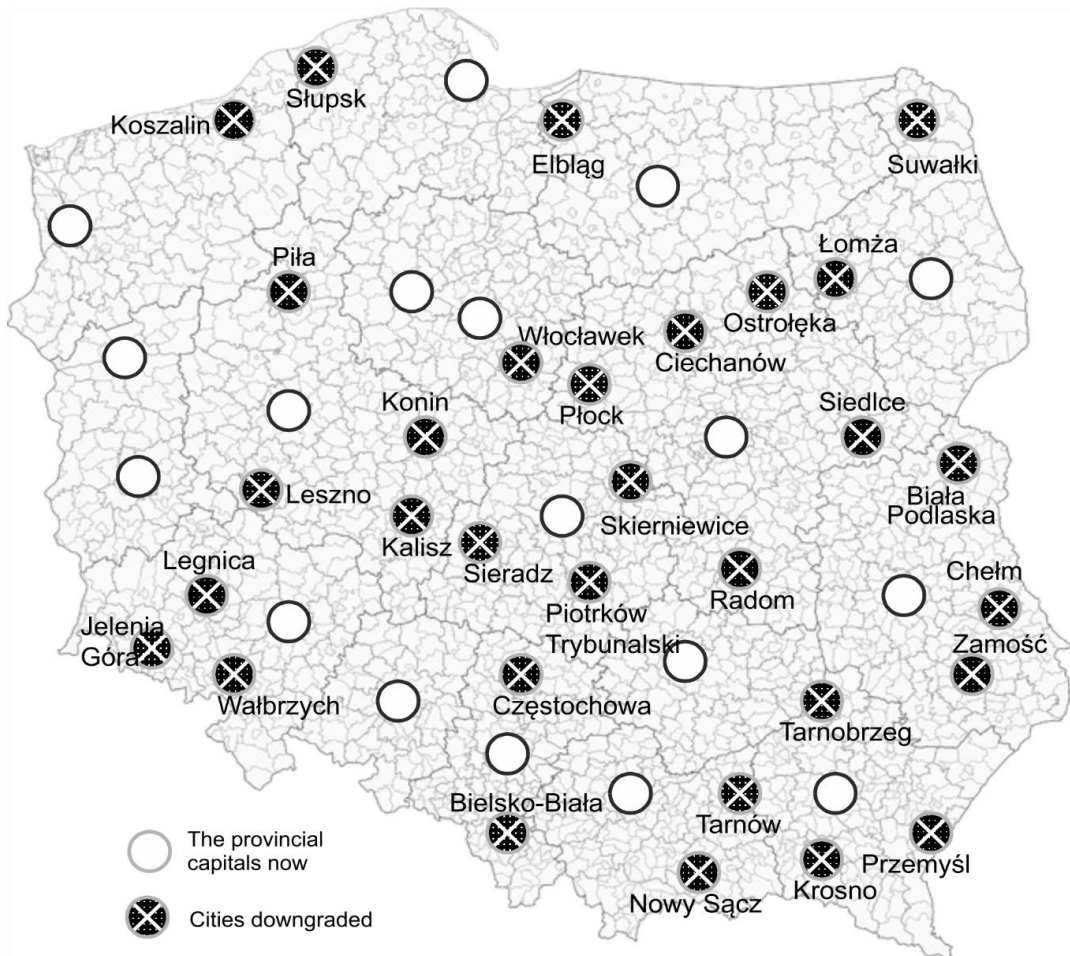


Figure 1. Cities downgraded according the administrative division in Poland dated January 1, 1999

(Source: Szymańska 2015)

METODOLOGY

The adopted methodology consisted in determination, on the basis of historical documents and available scientific studies, several groups of indicators, which were then summarized in a table of characters and classification of the analyzed cities was performed. Classifying factors were: the period of obtaining municipal rights, rank of administrative functions, and continuity of the administrative functions of the highest levels.

The historical approach of this analysis was based on the periods before 1975, accepting that this is the date, since when all test cities, for a period of 23 years, had the status of provincial capital. This factor was the choice of objects to study, thus it cannot be considered a determinant of historical aspects of administrative functions.

In the first step, the date of obtaining municipal rights of each city was determined. Then, referring to the historical view of political doctrines, including the development of statehood (Jakubowski, Sulowski, Wojtaszczyk 2003), analyzed cities were divided into three groups of centers according to obtaining municipal rights in a particular historical period, i.e. medieval cities (to XVth century), modern cities (XVI-XVII centuries), contemporary cities (since XVIIIth century). Therefore, the length of the administrative traditions of a given city was defined.

In the second step, the rank of the performed administrative functions according to the three levels of I, II and III order, was indicated, where: Level I – administrative centers of the first level (the capitals of voivodeships, provinces, territories or governorates); Level II – administrative centers of the second level (the capitals of counties, circuits, regencies, departments) and Level III – administrative centers of the third level (local centers).

In the third step, the reference to the sustainability of the administrative functions performance of the highest order, i.e. I and II, was made. Cities were divided into those with continued high administrative functions, periodic or episodic administrative functions, and cities without any episode of the high order administrative function.

Based on these three factors, degraded provincial cities were classified into 2 groups and three subgroups. There were: I. cities with a long administrative tradition (medieval cities) and II. cities with a short administrative tradition (modern and contemporary cities). In each of these groups, cities were classified according to: A) permanent high rank, B) periodic/episodic high rank, C) low rank.

ANALYSIS

The role of history in the development of power and governance centers is emphasized in many scientific discussions (Kaczmarek 1996; Wendt 2001), but also is used in practice during making decisions about changes in territorial divisions. The historic tradition of administrative functions becomes an important argument in the territorial consciousness of residents at every level of territorial divisions (Bartkowski 2003).

Administrative functions belong to the oldest forms of activity in the city (Kaczmarek 1996; Suliborski 2001). They determined other social and economic activity before establishing the statehood on Polish territory. However, the organizational structure of administrative tasks was shaped from period of gaining the municipal rights. Particularly important for the development of the city was acting as a supra-local, which according to T. Kaczmarek (1996), gave the cities the prestige of an important political, social and religious center.

In order to determine the length of administrative traditions performed by cities in the analyzed group, their age structure according to the municipal rights, was identified. The locations acts were given to all the analyzed cities in the past (figure 2).

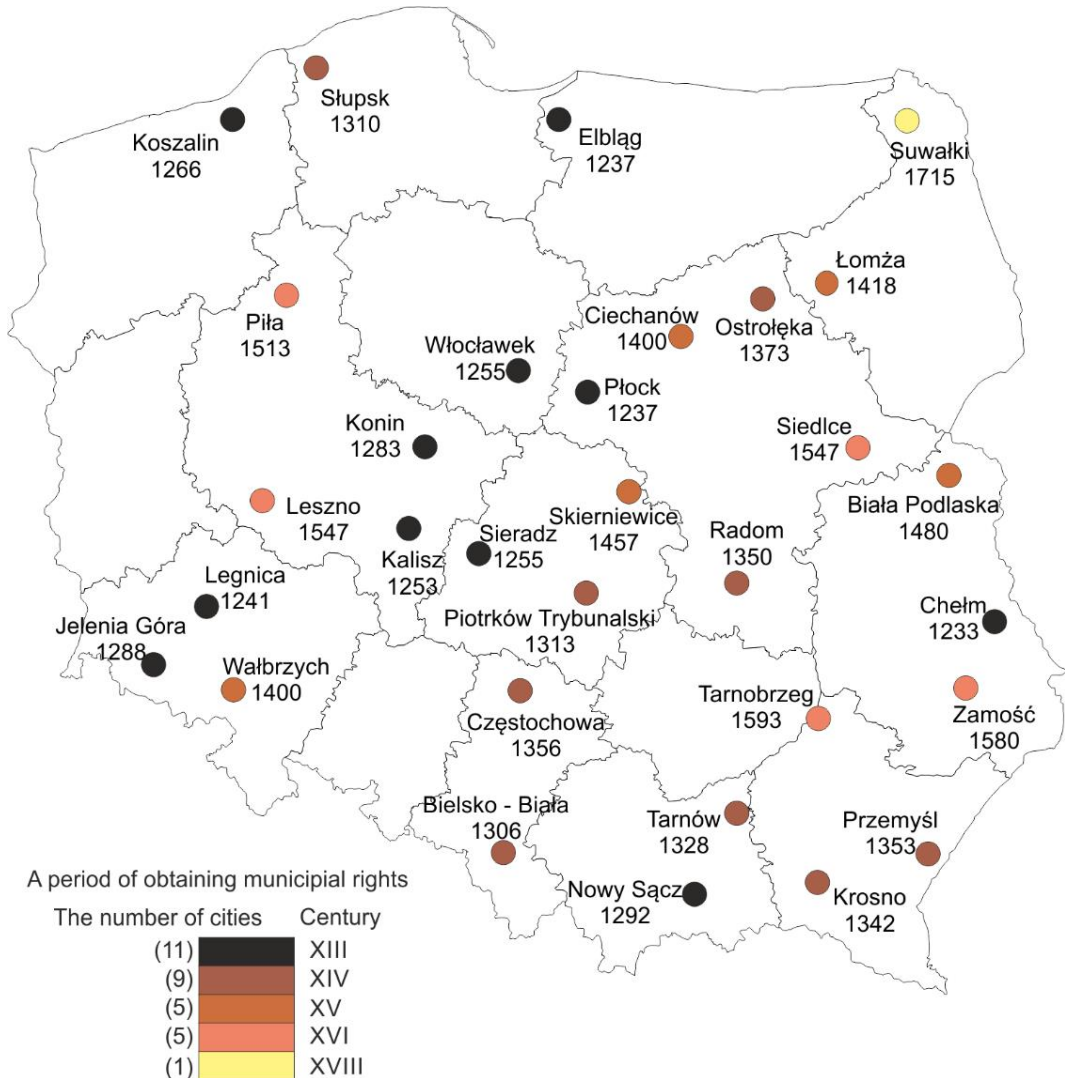


Figure 2. A period of obtaining municipal rights by degraded cities in Poland
(Source: Own elaboration based on Krzysztofik 2007 and Gawryszewski 2005)

Among cities with the longest administrative tradition, there is Chełm, which received the municipal rights in 1233. It is a city which is now situated in the Lublin province and has the status of a city with county rights. In its rich history, Chełm was the capital of Chełm province in 1793-1795 and 1975-1998. In addition, it played the role of capital of the historic Chełm Land and Chełm Governorate. It was also a royal city of the Crown of the Polish Kingdom.

The youngest city in this category is Suwałki, which received the municipal rights nearly 500 years later, i.e. in 1715. The city is located in north-eastern Poland in Podlaskie province. From a historical point of view, it is the capital of Suwałki region. The region in the period 1569-1795, within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, was part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The city was founded relatively late, because in fact arose from a settlement founded by the Order of the Camaldolese, who received the town privileges from King

Augustus II. In subsequent historical periods, Suwałki has remained within the Kingdom of Prussia since 1795, and has been included in the Duchy of Warsaw since 1807. During the existence of the Polish Kingdom, for a short time in 1816-1837, the Augustów province was created with its capital in Suwałki. Later, the town was the capital of the governorate, and since 1863, once again became the capital of the Augustów province. The city retained this status until the First World War.

In the classification of studied cities according to historical duration, the reference to the classical doctrines of political development of the state was made (Jakubowski, Sulowski, Wojtaszczyk 2003). Cities were divided into 3 groups: medieval cities (to XVth century), modern cities (XVI-XVII century), and contemporary cities (since XVIIIth century).

Among the tested set of former provincial cities, the age structure indicates that this are relatively old cities (table 1). Over 35% of them received municipal rights in the XIIIth century, 29% in the XIVth century, and about 16% in the XVth century. In general, 25 cities received important municipal privileges in the Middle Ages (80.6%). This fact makes these cities have a sense of a long-term urbanity tradition.

Due to the low representation of cities in the next two groups, they have been combined as contemporary cities. This group is formed by only 6 youngest cities of Leszno, Piła, Siedlce, Tarnobrzeg, Zamość and the already mentioned Suwałki. They represent 19.3% of the analyzed set of cities and have relatively shortest traditions of performing the administrative functions.

Table 1. The age structure of degraded cities in Poland
(Data source: Own elaboration based on Krzysztofik 2007 and Gawryszewski 2005)

Century of obtaining the municipal rights	The number of former provincial cities	
	N	%
The medieval towns/cities		
XIII	11	35.5
XIV	9	29.0
XV	5	16.1
The modern towns/cities		
XVI	5	16.1
XVIII	1	3.2

Analyzed cities were assessed in terms of the rank of the administrative functions performed. Three importance levels were distinguished: Level I, Level II, and Level III (figure 3). In different historical periods, studied cities changed both their nationality and functioned in different structures of the territorial divisions. The study took into account the level of territorial divisions for the contemporary historical period and nationality. As a result, investigated cities were classified to 3 groups, of which the first two were considered important supra-regional functions, while the third level was considered to be the local rank. In the first group of the first order functions, there were cities that played functions corresponding to the today's administrative functions of provincial cities and higher. The second group included cities of the rank of today's district towns (middle-level rank), while in group 3, there were cities corresponding to the functions of today's municipalities.

In addition, historical period, in which given functions were performed by specifying their durability, were marked. This category also included three

groups of classification: cities with a sustainable continuity of administrative functions of the I or II order, cities of periodic or episodic durability of administrative functions of the I or II order, and cities that did not have a function of the I or II order before 1975, playing only the III order functions (figure 3).

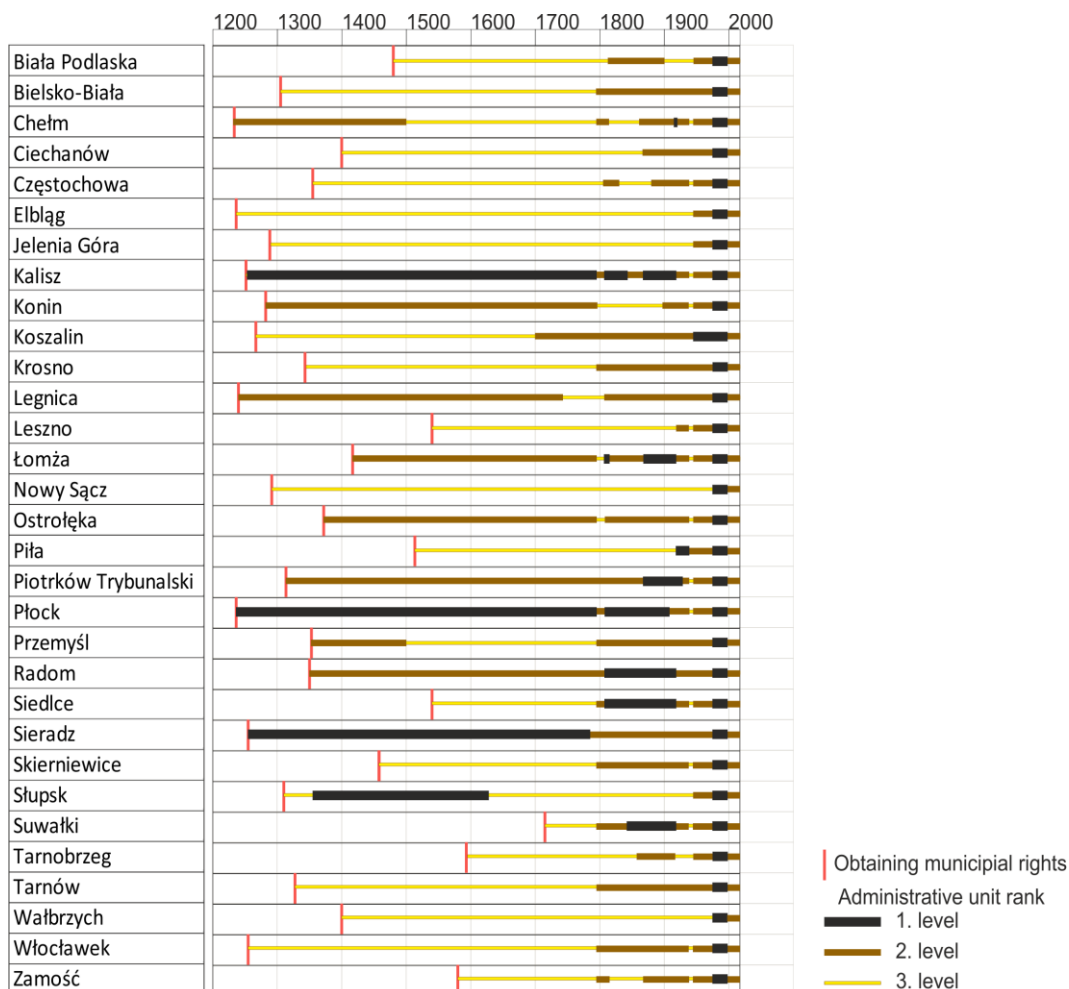


Figure 3. The continuity of the administrative rank by degraded cities in Poland
(Source: Own elaboration based on Walkiewicz 2006, *Miasta polskie... 1965-1967*)

Historical analysis of the rank of administrative functions of the former provincial cities in Poland indicated that most of these cities (61.3%), before ennoblement in 1975 to the rank of provincial capital, has never played as high administrative functions in the past (table 2). the historical administrative divisions, they were the capitals of the second order units (regencies, districts, circulations, circuits, departments). Some of them relatively late become even provincial centers such as Leszno in 1887, Skierniewice in 1867, or Krosno in 1865. Within this group, two of the cities, i.e. Nowy Sącz and Wałbrzych, did not play even the second order functions before. Their establishment of provincial cities had no historical justification, although they were old town, which received

the municipal rights relatively early, i.e. in the XIIIth and XVth centuries, respectively.

Among 31 former provincial cities, only 12 played a role of administrative centers of the highest degree in the past. They were Chełm, Kalisz, Koszalin, Łomża, Piła, Piotrków Trybunalski, Płock, Radom, Siedlce, Sieradz, Słupsk, and Suwałki. This argument was eagerly cited in discussions over the last territorial division of Poland (in 1999). The authorities of these cities tried to prove the necessity of leaving their province in a new administrative structure due to the historical tradition of administrative functions.

Table 2. The administrative rank of degraded cities in Poland before 1975
(Data source: Own elaboration based on Walkiewicz 2006, *Miasta polskie...* 1965-1967)

The administrative rank	The number of former provincial cities	
	N	%
level I	12	38.7
level II	17	54.8
level III	2	6.5

Two cities had the highest and longest administrative rank in this group: Kalisz and Płock. These were the headquarters of provinces in pre-partition Poland, then during the partitions, they played functions of, e.g. capitals of the departments of the Duchy of Warsaw, capitals of provinces in the Polish Kingdom, or governorate capitals in the Russian zone. They have lost their high administrative rank in 1916. In this group, also Sieradz, which was the capital of the province in the administrative structure of the country during the pre-partition period, and at the time of partition became the center of a lower level, should be mentioned. Łomża, Ciechanów, Przemyśl, and Chełm, before partition of Poland, were the administrative centers of lands – units equivalent to today's provinces. In turn, Radom and Siedlce had the highest rank during the occupation. Legnica and Słupsk were the capitals of the duchy. Piła was the unit of the highest level for a short period in 1922-1938 as the capital of the province Nowa Marchia Graniczna. In this group, Koszalin achieved the highest status as last one; it was established as the provincial city in Poland after World War II.

The third relevant factor was the durability of important administrative functions performance. In this perspective, it was assumed that the variability of the history of Polish lands authorizes to recognize that the administrative function was stable if it was performed during the entire period of the city existence at the function level of the I or II order, with the exception of World War II (table 3).

Table 3. The stability administrative functions of the first and second level
of degraded cities in Poland
(Data source: Own elaboration)

The stability administrative functions	The number of former provincial cities	
	N	%
permanent	8	29.0
periodic/episodic	21	67.7
lack	2	6.5

Analysis of this factor indicates a slight stability in the performance of the highest administrative functions of analyzed cities. Nearly 68% of them (21

cities) played these functions periodically or episodically, 2 cities did not have them at all, while only 8 cities were distinguished by relative stability of these functions. These include the previously mentioned: Kalisz, Łomża, Ostrołęka, Piotrków Trybunalski, Płock, Radom and Sieradz. From this point of view, these are the cities that should have the most well-established administrative traditions. This should greatly facilitate the efficient management of the city and identify with the region in terms of the management characteristics.

Summarizing conducted analysis, cities were classified taking into account the above variables. Two groups of centers in terms of the length of administrative traditions were specified. Among them, 3 subgroups taking into account the durability and the rank of administrative functions, were distinguished (table 4).

Table 4. The classification of former provincial cities in Poland in terms of tradition and continuity of administrative functions

(Data source: Own elaboration)

The tradition and stability administrative functions	The former provincial cities		
	N	%	Name
I. The medieval towns/cities			
A. Cities with permanent high rank administrative function	8	29.0	Kalisz, Legnica, Łomża, Ostrołęka, Piotrków Trybunalski, Płock, Radom, Sieradz
B. Cities with periodic/episodic high rank administrative function	15	43.4	Biała Podlaska, Bielsko-Biała, Chełm, Ciechanów, Częstochowa, Elbląg, Jelenia Góra, Konin, Koszalin, Krosno, Przemyśl, Skierniewice, Słupsk, Tarnów, Włocławek
C. Cities without administrative function of high rank	2	6.5	Nowy Sącz, Wałbrzych
II. The modern towns/cities			
A. Cities with permanent high rank administrative function	-	-	x
B. Cities with periodic/episodic high rank administrative function	6	19.3	Leszno, Piła, Siedlce, Suwałki, Tanobrzeg, Zamość
C. Cities without administrative function of high rank	-	-	x

In classification of the former provincial cities, mainly cities of group I.B. occurred - Medieval cities with periodic or episodic periods of high-ranking administrative functions performed. These are the cities located in different Polish regions, both in central Poland, as well as on its borders.

Group I.C. contained two old cities situated in the southern Poland at the foot of mountains and located due to the large defensive qualities. Certainly, the lack of tradition and continuity of high-ranking administrative functions did not justify the ennoblement of these cities to the level of provincial capitals.

The most visible and stable administrative functions characterized cities from I.A. group. These are the cities situated in the central part of Poland on the territory for the longest time historically associated with Polish lands. These are centers, which have the richest tradition of administrative functions and can

therefore be considered the most experienced in shaping the culture of city management, city development and territorial identity organization.

Among the contemporary cities, all centers have been classified to II.B. group. Their relatively high administrative rank was shaped periodically and relatively late, since at the end of XIXth century or early XXth century. Only two of them (Siedlce and Suwałki) have played in the past functions of the I order. It can be assumed that these are young cities with poorly shaped tradition of performing the administrative functions.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

In the post-war Polish history, many administrative changes occurred. These changes concerned both adjustments of territorial divisions, as well as changes in the administrative rank of many cities. As a result of these reforms in 1975-1998, there was a territorial fragmentation of created units with the rank of a province. Forty-nine provinces were created giving the new administrative functions at the highest level to 32 cities. Since 1999, some of them lost its prestigious function and was degraded to the rank of district towns. The analysis included 31 administratively degraded provincial cities.

Among these cities, there were mostly old ones, which received municipal rights in the Middle Ages (80.6%). Not all of them had, however, historically documented tradition of performing the high-ranking administrative functions. Only 12 centers from the test set of cities played the role of the highest level administrative center, and only 8 showed the continuity of administrative functions.

Classification of the former provincial cities in Poland indicated that the majority of them (43.4% - group I.B) b were the old cities with periodic or episodic traditions of performing the administrative functions of the highest rank. The second important group (29% - group I.A) included old cities with enduring high administrative rank. In terms of tradition and continuity of administrative functions, this was a collection of the most experienced centers. The rich tradition should reflect the organizational culture of city management. Cities from the group I.C (6.5%) were the least significant in terms of historical factors. These were old cities that never played any significant administrative functions. They acquired this status for the first time in 1975. Likewise, little importance of historical administrative traditions can locate a city in group II.B (19.3%). In this case, they are cities located in late years, and administrative features of the highest level (rather the II level) were played periodically or episodically. They did not develop any permanent administrative traditions, and ennoblement to the role of a regional center was a great opportunity.

Currently degraded provincial capitals, as a result of administrative reform in 1975, received a very important function, which has become a factor for social and economic recovery. Their demographic and economic development in this period was more intense than in present provincial cities performing this function since the beginning of the post-war Polish history. However, after the loss of the highest rank function, studied cities began to experience a demographic crisis much harder. At the same time, not all of them experienced a similar setback in the economic sphere (Walkiewicz 2006, Szymańska 2015). May tradition and continuity of important administrative functions be a factor in regulating the development trends of units of urban settlements? Example of the former provincial cities in Poland does not give a clear answer. Certainly, some of

these cities should more than other ones keep the ability to manage the city, maintaining territorial influence because of its long administrative tradition.

However, a conclusion arises that, from the point of view of historical factors, giving a high administrative rank to most of these cities was unauthorized and did not bring the expected development results.

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