

# *Polish Cities Face the EU – Europeanization of Post-Socialist Cities as a Type of Outward Political Rescaling*

*Marta Lackowska\**

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The paper looks at the strategies adopted by the post-socialist cities faced with the political multilevel system of the European Union. In so doing, they are seen as a special type of outward political rescaling and analysed as a part of a wider urban strategy of political internationalisation. The empirical evidence is based on the study of the twelve largest Polish cities, members of Eurocities and other lobbying organisations. Leaning on the Klijn and Koppenjan (2000) typology of possible orientation of public authorities faced with global pressures, the character of urban strategies is discussed, whereby three forms are distinguished: networking, bilateral and individual activities. The main question of the study is what Europeanization of the largest Polish cities looks like. The study reveals that the assumed

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\* Marta Lackowska, PhD, assistant professor at the Department of Local Development and Policy, Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland (docentica Odjela za lokalni razvoj i javne politike, Fakultet za geografiju i regionalne studije, Sveučilište u Varšavi, Poljska, e-mail: m.lackowska@uw.edu.pl)

reactive and non-strategic participation of Polish cities in Europeanization processes is true only to a certain extent.

*Key words:* rescaling, internationalization, Europeanization, post-socialist cities, Poland

## 1. Introduction

Since the late 1980s, cities all over the world have been experiencing extensive changes related to the broad restructuring of the capital accumulation system (Jessop, 2002; Brenner, 2004). The processes of globalisation, especially the rise of numerous supranational organisations and the development of transborder regional forms of state cooperation having both economic and political interests (like the European Union) have contributed to the phenomenon sometimes called »the crisis of the state«. The term, although deceiving (Jessop, 2002), draws attention to the undeniable change in the position of the state apparatus in the global market and political system (Sassen, 2006). National territories ceased to be units that control and enclose economic activity and power relations. This triggered a need to conceptualise new spaces for political action, which would be free from methodological territorialism and nationalism (Brenner, 2004: 74). The concept of rescaling, offers a focus on socially produced relations (scales) that may cut across traditional units of reference. By noting the importance of change in the role of national states, rescaling gives floor to the analysis of scales produced by actors other than states: subnational units or supranational organizations. This attitude is closely connected to the phenomenon of glocalisation, i.e. shifts of power in both directions: upwards and downwards from the state level (Swyngedouw, 1997, 2004; Sassen, 2006). The political vacuum that emerged as a result of »hollowing out« the state powers (Jessop, 1997) is sometimes claimed (e.g. Bagnasco, Le Galès, 2000) to be filled in by subnational units, leading to the resurgence of localities, regions, and cities (Brenner, 2004: 5-7). Attention has therefore turned towards localities and regions, as the sites where the global processes take the real form. It is claimed that subnational units (especially the largest cities) can react faster and more adequately to the dynamics of the global system. As Brenner (1998: 4) states, »the key feature of this emergent configuration of world capitalism is that cities – or more precisely large-scale urbanized regions – rather than territorial economies of states are its most fundamental geographical units«. Under the rescaled global system and the change in states' roles,

cities have become not only important nodes of the economic space of flows generating innovation and creative industries, but also »new political territories« (Brenner, 1999). The thesis on the dominant role of the cities is sometimes contested as exaggerated, but Bagnasco and Le Galès (2000: 7) convincingly state that »This space may be limited, yet the room for manoeuvre is growing for cities.«

Indeed, one may claim that the loosening grasp of national states has contributed to the cities' regaining political autonomy, which they had had before the establishment of the national states in the late Middle Ages in Europe (Atkinson, Rossignolo, 2008: 5–6). As a consequence of the changes in recent decades, cities have, to a great extent, ceased to be parts of the national systems, subordinated to state apparatus. These processes have been strengthened by the global economic pressure of competitiveness exerted on subnational units. Cities have started to carry out entrepreneurial policies in order to enhance their competitive advantage (see Harvey, 1989). Lefevre and d'Albergo (2007) distinguish three strategies of internationalization of urban politics: economic, political, and social. In practice, the distinction is not clear, as we usually deal with mixtures of motives and one can only speak about a prevailing orientation. Political motives, placed in the centre of this study, come into question when the international activities are intended to strengthen a city's political role or position. These actions include international lobbying and influencing decision-making processes on the international scene, as well as »diplomacy from below« (or »para-diplomacy« as Aldecoa and Keating, 1999 call it). Obviously, neither political nor socio-economic internationalisation is a new phenomenon, but »they are felt to have different meanings in a globalising world« (Lefevre, d'Albergo, 2007: 317). Para-diplomacy seems to correspond perfectly with the classic understanding of state rescaling, which causes shifts of power, *inter alia* towards subnational entities.

The resurgence of urban political power in the European context is strongly linked to the European integration. Changes in the sovereignty of the states deriving from the EU membership, together with the EU principles of subsidiarity and participation, and documents stressing the role of the cities as the centres of innovation and high-tech development, have all strengthened the cities' position. Moreover, cities entangled in the EU multilevel governance system (Benz, 2004; Tömmel, 2008) have started a conscious building of their position in this system, e.g. by making themselves visible on the political scene above all by acting within the EU institutions (Heinelt, Niederhafner, 2008). This leads to the concept of Europeanization, understood as a process of mutual adjustment of the

EU norms and structures, and the ones of member states and sub-state actors. Europeanization studies, initially focused on the relation between the EU and its member states (MS), expanded on the regions, and finally focused their interest on localities, especially cities (Tofarides, 2003; Hamedinger et al., 2008; Heinelt, Niederhafner, 2008). In general, the research on Europeanization tends to lean towards a top-down perspective, especially regarding the studies on subnational units. Their ability and effective power to influence the EU level seem fairly limited (Heinelt, Niederhafner, 2008), which strengthens the inclination to deal with the top-down Europeanization only (or mainly). However, without the bottom-up approach talking about Europeanization in terms of para-diplomacy and rescaling is all but complex and profound. Cities' attempts to influence the broad, international context of functioning correspond to the idea of extended room for political manoeuvre much more than adopting the EU rules in the light of top-down approach.

Cities as political actors are tangled in numerous regional, national and European networks, which are overlapping in many aspects, thus contributing to the complexity of the rescaled system (see also Zanon, 2013). Considering Europeanization as one of those overlapping spatialities in which cities are involved (Zanon, 2013) offers a new perspective to both Europeanization and urban studies.

## 2. Research Methodology

The concept of rescaling has acquired numerous understandings and foci (Brenner, 2009), most popular of which are state and metropolitan perspectives (e.g. Park, 2013, van der Heiden et al. 2013, Zanon 2013). An urban perspective of rescaling has been adopted in the paper, concentrating on the construction of new scales (i.e. power relations) by urban authorities towards the EU system.

Dealing with Europeanization as an example of outward political rescaling (Table 1) allows a wider conceptual background often missed in the Europeanization studies (Lodge, 2006). This implies taking into consideration not only top-down Europeanization but also a bottom-up perspective (production of scales implies both directions).

In conceptualising the attitude of urban authorities towards the EU, the distinction of the four possible strategies by Klijn and Koopenjan (2000) is a very helpful tool. They claim that public authorities can act in different ways towards global networks and pressures. These strategies are: (1)

negation or retrenchment, (2) joining existing networks, (3) taking the leading role in existing networks (e.g. modifying them), (4) creation of their own network(s). One can assume that the last two types correspond to the bottom-up direction of influence on the line EU-subnational units (if the network itself has a possibility to reach and influence the EU level). In discussing the character of urban strategies of outward rescaling, the author distinguishes between three types of activities: networking (especially activity in Eurocities), bilateral activities (cities twinning) and individual undertakings (like competing for and hosting big international events, or using EU funds). The distinction is caused by the fact that each of the types is meant to serve different goals and is connected to specific obstacles and requirements from the city perspective (see the following sections). Interviewed urban officers and politicians often stated it was impossible to compare activities of those three types since they were completely different elements of urban politics.

Table 1: Scheme of consideration on the wider background

Scale	Orientation of rescaling								
	political			economic			social		
Inward									
Upward									
Outward national context (domestic rescaling)									
Outward international context (international rescaling, i.a. Europeanization)									
	N	T	I	N	T	I	N	T	I
	Type of action								

N-networking, T – twinning, I – individual activities; grey marks the field of interest in this paper.

Source: Author's elaboration

The empirical evidence is based on research of the largest Polish cities. Considering post-socialist context responds to a gap in rescaling studies identified by Park (2013), who noted their focus on North American and West European context. It also provides insight into specificities of urban rescaling stemming from the fact that Polish cities have entered the global (and EU) system only recently. It is unquestionable that the room for political manoeuvring for post-socialist cities has increased significantly over the last 20 years and that the change has been much bigger than for west-

ern European cities. For cities of Central-East Europe, there was a shift from functioning in the centrally commanded non-democratic regimes to operating in the decentralized, self-governmental democratic systems opened to the international influence. The difference was also generated by the sudden character, complexity and intensity of changes in a post-socialist context. The end of the communist era suddenly exposed Polish cities to the processes that had already been taking place in the capitalist world (Węclawowicz, 2007). The pressures of globalisation, influencing the capitalist (Western) cities since the early 1980s, have gradually changed their logic from the local growth system to the one of the »entrepreneurial machines« (Jessop, 1997; Sagan, 2009). These pressures were exerted on the post-socialist cities quite abruptly, as one of the consequences of domestic political transformation.<sup>1</sup> This implies a direct reference to the basic process of rescaling, namely state rescaling – the change of the state regime triggered modification of functioning conditions for subnational entities. The complexity and intensity of changes stemmed from the fact that for post-socialist cities the changes of the global system ran in parallel with national transformation. The interwoven character of global and domestic transformation is illustrated by the term »transformation cascade« or »double transition«. In a simpler scheme of double transition, Sykora (2000) distinguished: (1) Central-East European transition to a market economy and democratic policy-making (which includes opening to the world economy) and (2) the global transformation caused by economic globalisation. In the concept of a transformation cascade these processes are treated in a more detailed way – modernisation, metropolitanisation, political transformation and globalisation are distinguished (Zborowski, 2001). One can also add Europeanization to this list. Moreover, mere political transformation cannot be regarded as a homogeneous phenomenon. It included profound changes in the state (recreation of democratic structures and self-government), society (recreation of democratic civil society), and the economy (reintroduction of the private sector).

Therefore, it seems reasonable to expect a higher intensity of changes related to the usage of the newly extended space for political action with regard to post-socialist cities than to the capitalist ones. At the same time

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<sup>1</sup> In Poland, the main changes were carried out within the so-called »Barcelowicz Plan«. This Plan of complex reforms was elaborated within a few months of 1989. Its realisation, starting in 1990, aimed at transforming Poland and its economy from a centrally planned system to a liberal market one. In parallel, administrative reforms were conducted in 1990 and 1998 (including the creation of territorial governments).

though, considering the relatively recent joining of the Polish cities to the EU, they may be expected to act passively and reactively rather than dominantly in the new arena of international relations. So, what does Europeanization of the largest Polish cities look like? What scales do they create and which ones do they use? Are they reactive or creative and strategic? Do they undertake any bottom-up actions? Taking into account previous studies showing the weakness of strategic management in local policies in Poland, one can assume that non-strategic conformist behaviour also prevails in internationalisation. Keeping this in mind, the author is especially interested in detecting any signs opposing this thesis, i.e. in finding any evidence of strategic thinking and creative activities (corresponding to the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> stage of Klijn and Koopenjan's typology) of Polish cities faced with the new possibilities. The author proposes that such elements are already present in rescaling politics of the biggest Polish cities.

The empirical matters elaborated on in the following section are based on a study comprised of the 12 largest cities in Poland, members of lobbying organisations like Eurocities (at least for some time), and the Union of Polish Metropolises (operating in the national arena). The study included a review of the official documents issued by the cities and city associations, analysis of statistical data, and in-depth face-to-face interviews carried out with urban politicians (deputy mayors and councillors) and officials responsible for city activity in the investigated networks as well as with employees of the chosen urban institutions (office directors of metropolitan associations, Convention Bureaus, international networks whose secretaries are located in Poland). Altogether 25 interviews were conducted in six cities. In addition, a mail-survey was sent to all 12 cities, gathering 10 responses. The material was collected between 2010 and 2012.

### 3. Europeanization by Networks

Network activities have the strongest political orientation and biggest influential power. Collective lobbying has greater possibilities of interest mediation and can be more successful than the undertakings of single cities (Heinelt, Niederhafner, 2008: 176). In general, networks are most likely to develop goals connected to political pressure and influencing institutional context, but their specific orientation may differ. We can distinguish strict political networks focused on representation tasks (including lobbying), and functionally oriented sectoral networks focused on both the exchange of experience and cooperation in precisely defined policy fields

(Brunazzo, 2011: 303). Considering the theme of the research, the author concentrates on the first type of organisation (even though they often develop more functional branches, making Brunazzo's distinction blurred).

The most influential political urban network in the European context is definitely Eurocities (Tofarides, 2003; Heinelt, Niederhafner, 2008). Being the widest network in Europe both in terms of membership and scope of activity, Eurocities has established influential channels of access to the EU policy-making process and therefore can be treated as the most relevant body when speaking of urban political rescaling.

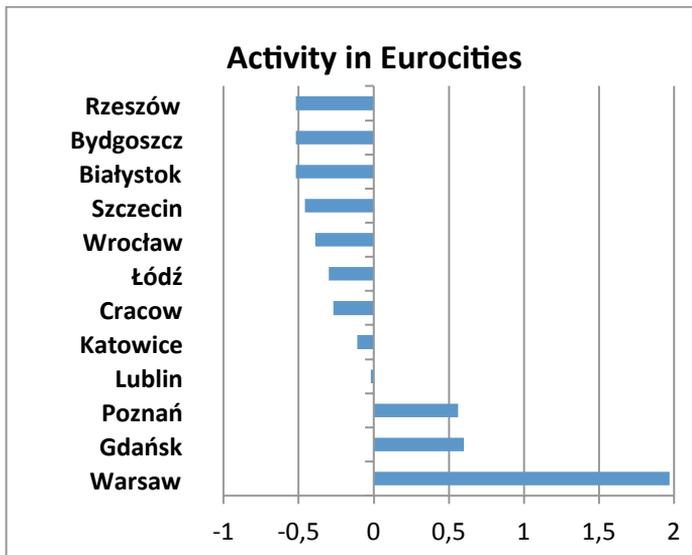
In 2012, 11 out of 12 city-members of the UMP were full members of Eurocities. Only three countries have a larger number of member cities (UK 17, France 13, Germany 13), which can be interpreted either as an initial enthusiasm or a lack of strategic thought by the cities located in the new EU member states. In 2004, Polish accession to the EU paved the way for Polish cities to become full members of Eurocities, and an immediate reaction was a campaign by the Union of Polish Metropolises (UMP)<sup>2</sup> to have all its members in this prestigious European group. This aim was accomplished in November 2005. However, in 2010 the first withdrawal from Eurocities took place, which may be seen as a first sign of more selective and strategic thinking about internationalisation. The city of Szczecin decided against further membership, arguing that the benefits were unclear and unsatisfactory, whereas the annual fee was high. Moreover, Szczecin has decided to focus on active participation in a more specific organization, The Union of the Baltic Cities, which better answers the specific needs of the city (Szczecin, in north-western Poland, is a port city located 60 km from the Baltic shore). In autumn 2012, Cracow started the procedure of withdrawal. In this case, an obvious direct reason was the search for savings in times of financial crisis, but one has to admit that the cutting referred to the organisation which never seemed a priority for Cracow (as it can be seen in Figure 1, its engagement in Eurocities was rather limited), so the withdrawal also had a strategic lining. Membership in Eurocities is expensive, especially when compared to the other international urban organisations. Interviewed urban officials and politicians agreed that 'it is not worth being a passive member – if you pay so much for access to a group, you want to act! Perhaps this simple calculation is one of the reasons why Polish cities are not as passive members as expected.

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<sup>2</sup> UMP is a Polish organization gathering 12 largest Polish cities. It has a strong political orientation and is very active as far as domestic law proposals are concerned. It fights for special status for metropolitan areas and for establishing urban policy in Poland and the EU.

Looking at the level of their activity<sup>3</sup> one can note significant differentiation. It turns out that there is a large group of cities whose support speaks against active rescaling. Most of the cities admitted they neither had come up with any initiatives nor had realized a project with other Eurocities members. Their participation seems limited to the frequently received e-mails (information flowing in one direction: from the association to the city) and participation in an annual General Assembly. This group of passive cities is composed mainly of the cities not participating in any of the subgroups. Their representatives admit that they see themselves as observers, information receivers, and learners (thanks to the possibility of contact with better-developed European cities) that are not yet ready to give their own input. The relation of Cinderella and the rich Prince described by Swianiewicz (2005; Compare: Baldersheim, Stæhlberg, 1999) shines strongly throughout these utterances.

Figure 1: Index of activity of Polish cities in Eurocities



Note: The X-axis presents standardized (z-score) values of the index.

<sup>3</sup> Four elements were taken into consideration: participation in fora and working groups, hosting Eurocities events and chairing its subgroups (for an index description, see the appendix). The information from the survey and interviews was taken into consideration, but could not be included in the index as it referred to some of the cities only.

Table 2: Activity of Polish cities in Eurocities

	Fora	WGs	Events*	Chairing
Białystok	0	0	0	0
Bydgoszcz	0	0	0	0
Gdańsk	5	7	9	0
Katowice	4	3	1	0
Cracow	2	2	1	0
Lublin	3	8	1	0
Łódź	2	3	0	0
Poznań	2	3	7	1
Rzeszów	0	0	0	0
Szczecin	1	0	0	0
Warsaw	6	21	10	2
Wrocław	1	0	1	0

\* Events consider Eurocities meetings hosted in the cities between 2005 and 2010.

The data come from the end of 2010, which allowed for inclusion of all 12 cities under study including Szczecin, which has not been a member of Eurocities since 2011).

Source: Author's calculations based on the data from the Eurocities website

There is also a group of very active cities, which have not only joined a network, but also make efforts to modify it and take a leading position in its various parts. It comes as no surprise that the capital city has the safe leading position in this group (the best illustration of which is the fact that in November 2010, Warsaw's mayor became the president of Eurocities). Furthermore, the cities of Poznań (chair of the Economic Forum until 2012) and Gdańsk appear to be very active. The only city from east Poland getting somewhat close to this group is Lublin.

A good illustration of such creative, strategic activities is the fact that two working groups (WGs) of Eurocities were initiated by Polish cities: Branding & City Attractiveness by Lublin, and European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement by Warsaw. Moreover, it turns out that the latter WG is among the most popular ones with Polish cities. This proves that the modification of the network proposed by two Polish cities have indeed made the network more attractive to the entire national group. In addition, the European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement WG helps answer specif-

ic Polish demands connected to national policy. Poland acts in the EU as a state fostering East Partnership, and Polish cities have undertaken a role in this area of Polish foreign policy (see the following section).

Polish cities participate in other urban networks as well. However, due to their less political and more functional character, they will not receive as much attention as Eurocities. It is enough to say that the traces of strategic and selective thinking are visible there as well. Some cities are members of numerous groups (seven to nine groups!), which could be seen as opportunist and non-strategic behaviour. Yet, looking at the organizations chosen by individual cities, one finds a hint of specialization and strategic choices. Warsaw, the capital, participates in large political organizations, like the one gathering the European capital cities. It participates in Eurocities' WGs that have a strong political orientation: Governance (responsible for contacts with the EU institutions) and EU Budget Task Force, which indicates the will to be updated and informed about European political matters (the discussion about how this will and ambition is being realized, and what the real legal possibilities of such a bottom-up influence are, is yet another question). Gdańsk and Szczecin, due to their location in the Baltic region, are active in specific Baltic-oriented organizations (Gdańsk is a board member and hosts the Secretariat of the Union of the Baltic Cities). Cracow, a UNESCO city, participates in many organizations connected to tourism and historical heritage. Łódź, with its traditions of textile industries, found itself a place in the ACTE. Among those networks, there are several organizations (apart from Eurocities) of a mixed politico-functional character, such as the Union of the Baltic Cities and Metrex.

Political interest of Polish cities is also proved by the fact that they reach European institutions by means of domestic organizations. Both of the biggest urban associations in Poland (the Union of Polish Metropolises and the Association of Polish Cities) do not limit themselves to the nationwide activities. They also refer a lot to the EU law proposals (in the case of UMP, almost 40 per cent of its position papers issued in 2004–2010 referred to the European level!), have their representatives in the EU institutions (like the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, the Committee of the Regions and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe), and foster international relations of their city-members.

Project networks are yet another aspect of Europeanization. Here, URBAN and URBACT initiatives are the most important tool, often dis-

cussed with reference to cities' Europeanization (Tofarides, 2003; Hamedinger et al., 2008). However, their goal is rather apolitical, focused on experience exchange and joint problem-solving instead of lobbying. Therefore, it will be mentioned only briefly, as an interesting example of sharing norms, values and ideas among EU cities without EU institutions involved in the process. The only element of top-down 'Europeanization' is the mere funding and general support by the EU. Polish cities have participated in both stages of this EU initiative (considering 12 cities under study, five of them did not participate in URBACT I, and only three participated in URBACT II). As the most active appear Warsaw and Poznań (taking part in five projects each). It is interesting that the cities that are not active in URBACT are also relatively passive members in Eurocities.

It seems that participation in URBACT confirms the thesis on reactive and non-strategic international activities of Polish cities. None of the 12 cities under study has acted as a project leader. They have merely joined the existing initiatives. The observation is especially telling if one is considering the biggest Polish cities, which were most likely to undertake a leading role. In this case, interpreting reactivity in terms of top-down Europeanization would be deceiving. As mentioned above, URBACT projects are created by the cities, so they present a tool for bottom-up rather than top-down Europeanization. Therefore, the fact that Polish cities use this tool only in passively can be treated as neglecting an opportunity to co-shape EU reality.

However, this does not mean that Polish cities have a suboptimal usage of the URBACT projects. A good explanation is given by the words of city hall officers from Poznań:

»We, as the city, are usually the partners in these projects; only rarely we act as leaders ... I think it is still too early for us. Being a leader of a big project is huge work! We do not have such a project-oriented organizational culture yet. It depends on the structure of the city hall. Our foreign partners find it easier to work horizontally; they have teams, working groups. We still have a vertical, hierarchical structure [in the city hall]. It would be a big problem to adjust it to a project, to include tasks leaders in this structure. We are still learning ... We do as much as we can here, locally, to use up the fact that we participate in a project, to benefit and learn from it. But in fact we often have a feeling of being added to a project, a feeling that the main topic of a project is not the main problem of our city!«

Indeed, it is much more beneficial for a city to participate in an initiative that has been invented as an exact response to the city problems. This aspect contests the proposition on active outward rescaling by Polish cities.

#### 4. Europeanization by Bilateral Activities

At first sight, twinning seems hardly political, and therefore not exactly crucial for the topic of this study. It is strongly focused on the experience exchange, solving specific problems, and international cooperation going beyond city halls (involving groups of citizens, schools, and local NGOs). It does not aim at political lobbying or direct position building (Baldersheim et al., 2002). Nonetheless, in many terms it seems to be political. Firstly, the development of twinning in Europe after the Second World War had a strong 'political' aim of preventing yet another conflict by fostering peaceful contacts in culture, sports, and education between the nations. As such, twinning is definitely the most bottom-up form of international relations, leaning on the activities of local communities and escaping any top-down rules. Secondly, as this section will try to show, many of such twinning activities contribute to the incremental and often unnoticed reaching of strictly political goals of the states.

By looking at the most popular directions of bilateral cooperation of Polish cities, we find strong traces of the past. Two most popular foreign cities with which Polish ones cooperate are Lviv and Vilnius – both once located within the boundaries of Poland. In a wider perspective, interest in East Europe and support for East Partnership national policy is clearly visible. Twenty per cent of the twinning agreements signed by 12 largest Polish cities have been made with the cities located in Central and Eastern Europe, especially Ukraine, Russia, and Georgia. Moreover, since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this has become the most dynamically developing direction of bilateral cooperation (next to China, see Figure 1).

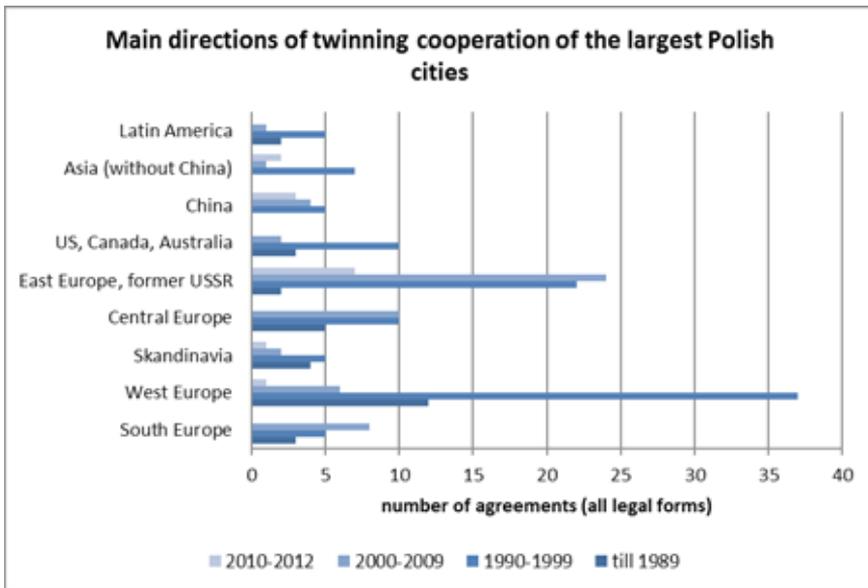
Officers of various city halls comment with astonishing unanimity way:

»In the 1990's we [Polish cities] received a lot from the western European cities ... know-how, experience, advice, support in various forms ... Now we give it back to the East. It is a kind of a mission« (interviews). This intense cooperation of Polish cities with eastern partners from non-EU states can be seen as a bottom-up extension of the EU. Indeed, contacts and cooperation with Polish cities bring these East European cities closer to the EU zone. In 2010 in Lublin, a meeting of the Eurocities Culture Forum was held and the subject was »Europe. Go

East». Then, in 2011, the Second Summit of East Partnership was held in Warsaw. There are also examples of non-EU cities becoming associated members of Eurocities after having been involved in the organization by a Polish partner.

The participation of Polish cities in the central policy of East Partnership is treated very seriously by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Territorial governments were called the most effective tools of East Partnership by a representative of the Ministry during a conference in Białystok.<sup>4</sup> This confirms the opinion on political character of twinning.

Figure 2: Twinning agreements signed by Polish cities



Source: Author's elaboration based on the data from the official websites of the cities

This strategy has brought a wide range of changes to twinning policy. In the 1990s, Polish cities experienced a boom in formal agreements with foreign partners (54 per cent of all partnerships of the 12 UMP cities are from the period 1990–1999). Moreover, these were mainly agreements with more developed cities of Western Europe or the US (Polish cities put themselves in the position of Cinderella, benefiting from a relation with the Prince, Swianiewicz, 2005). Only recently has it changed. Polish cities have started

<sup>4</sup> Conference on territorial governments in East Partnership took place in Białystok, 19 September 2013.

to act as the Prince; they have gone from learning from the others to learning by teaching others (which supports the thesis on active rescaling). Interviewed officers have mentioned that in the partnership with Ukrainian or Georgian cities Polish cities give a lot, but also benefit from these relations. Another element of change is that Polish cities have become more strategic-minded, carefully selecting new partners. Talking to the officials responsible for twinning relations, the author was often presented with a list of criteria for a potential partner (among other things, similar size and level of development, similar problems, and European location). One can note that twinning has changed its goal: from a sign of a city's prestige (materialized in a long list of distant and exotic friends) to the more down-to-earth aim of joint problem solving, which implies a careful selection of partners. Officers of one of the cities, describe it this way:

»Until recently, our policy in twinning was purely reactive; we did not initiate cooperation on our own. Now it has changed. We have started initiating partnerships, we are more proactive. Nowadays, this zest [for international partnerships] of the 1990s is behind us. Our bilateral activities are more selective, conscious. We already know what we need. In international cooperation it is crucial not to lose this strategic perspective.«

Strategic thinking usually strengthens the European dimension of twinning: by looking for close partners with similar problems and operating in similar conditions, cities in many cases limit their search to the EU context. Among partner-cities of the 12 researched Polish cities, 1/3 are from the EU member states (further 20 per cent is from eastern Europe, which together makes more than 50 per cent of all twinning agreements).

Table 3: Main directions of twinning cooperation of Polish cities

Country	Number of agreements signed with cities in this state by 12 Polish largest cities	Per cent of all twinning agreements of Polish 12 largest cities
Ukraine	24	11.27
Germany	22	10.33
France	13	6.10
Russia	13	6.10
China	12	5.63
The US	12	5.63

Hungary	8	3.76
Netherlands	7	3.29
Great Britain	6	2.82
Georgia	5	2.35
Spain	5	2.35
Israel	5	2.35
Italy	5	2.35

Source: Author's calculation based on the data from the official websites of the cities

To conclude, when talking about Europeanization via twinning, we should keep in mind that much of convergence in this case occurs without mediation of the EU structures. To a large extent, twinning escapes a narrow definition of Europeanization fostered by political scientists. It is rather about spreading »European« ideas and values among local communities disregarding the EU structures. To a certain point, one may even talk about horizontal (bottom) cooperation, without the »up« element (links and mutual influence between city-partners only). Yet, there are also aspects shifting twinning to the upper levels. This is mainly due to the ways in which forms of cooperation evolve. There are two complementary directions:

- (1) *From a network to bilateral action.* This happens when a city finds itself a suitable partner from a wider network and starts close cooperation with it, independently from the network. Seventy per cent of the researched Polish cities have admitted that thanks to the membership in Eurocities they have started cooperation with chosen cities. »Partner search« service of Eurocities is a highly valued option. Interviewed officers claim that when looking for a partner (e.g. for a project) the first two ways are to ask the other twinning partners or to look up in the networks the city is in.

Yet another option is the creation of sub-networks in a big organization, i.e. the selection of a small group interested in a specific topic (in this way working groups in Eurocities are created). Sometimes this action can be triggered off by bilateral cooperation of network-members, which brings us to the second point.

- (2) *From bilateral cooperation to a network.* This seems a natural way of cooperation development. Along with the concept of spillover in neofunctionalism, cooperation with one partner can extend to other actors and lead to the creation of a network. One of

the Polish East cities, having an extensive network of partner-cities in the Ukraine, is considering launching a network on this basis. Furthermore, international organizations gathering cities usually had their beginning in close cooperation of two or more cities (e.g. Eurocities, the Union of the Baltic Cities).

Taking all this into account, one should be aware of the political potential twinning has in building a coherent Europe.

## 5. Europeanization by Individual Activities

It may also happen that individual cities undertake political initiatives, notwithstanding the formal networks or twinning agreements. These initiatives, however, are usually much weaker in political terms than joint actions. Moreover, their goal is usually slightly different. Even if it refers to political lobbying, it is aimed at solving a specific problem of a particular city, rather than at pushing through systemic legal changes. In most cases, however, individual activities aim to build the cities' position and visibility on the domestic and international scene. Among such undertakings there are a lot of initiatives stimulated by the EU, and therefore fostering Europeanization processes, for example the awards of the Council of Europe, hosting big European events or using the EU funds. *Ex definitione*, these activities combine top-down and bottom-up aspects. On the one hand, the rules and general frames are given by the EU institutions (e.g. requirements to be awarded with the prize of the Council of Europe (CoE) or selection of cities granted with the title of the European Capital of Culture). On the other hand, the way in which these frames are filled in depends on the cities.

The biggest group of individual outward rescaling activities is bidding for and hosting international events. In the literature on urban politics and development, this is a separate subject, often claimed to impact urban governance strongly. Organising a big sports, cultural or economic event is an occasion to present (at a cost of media broadcasting the event) a new image of a city. Apart from marketing gains, a city can benefit in various areas, such as the economy (additional income e.g. generated by tourist movement), infrastructure (not only directly connected to the event),<sup>5</sup> planning (changing the spatial structure of a district), governance culture

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<sup>5</sup> According to Gold and Gold (2011: 3), only 17 per cent of all spending for the organisation of the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992 was dedicated for sport facilities. A lion's share was spent on accompanying urban investments, improving the image of the city.

(developing a habit of cooperation), and social solidarity (local community mobilisation, identification with a place).

For us though, the most important impact is the improvement of the position and visibility of a city in the national and international arena. In these terms, several recent initiatives in which Polish large cities participate or have participated can be mentioned.

(1) EURO UEFA 2012 Championships. The decision to organize the European Football Championship in Poland started an intense competition between several cities for hosting the games. Finally four of them hosted the Championship.

(2) European Capital of Culture 2016 (ECC). At first, almost all of the 12 cities under study competed for the title. The second stage of the competition included well-developed initiatives, such as study tours to the foreign partner cities that happened to get the title before. Cities learnt from one another and used their experience in preparing the proposals. Thus, one of the purposes of the ECC was fulfilled, namely fostering cooperation and exchange of good practices between European cities. An interesting aspect is the exchange of experience between Polish cities. In the year 2000, Cracow was awarded the title (at that time the procedure and title were a bit different) and some cities fighting for the 2016 title asked Cracow for advice. In such a case, there is a mixture of scales: national one (cooperation between Polish cities) and international one (i.e. the aim going beyond national boundaries).

Interestingly, some enlivenment in the field of culture and local initiatives (like Councils of Culture) emerged in the cities (like Lublin) despite losing the competition or even in smaller cities (like Elbląg) which did not bid for the title at all. This proves that Europeanization pressure bears features of spillover effect and that passing on European standards can also happen within national context (here between the Polish cities).

(1) Meetings within the Presidency of Poland in the EU Council. The selection of the hosts of these international diplomatic and accompanying (cultural) meetings was made by a group consisting of the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Regional Development. Therefore, again, we have an example of an intersection of the scales: domestic one (deciding on the location) and the EU one (actually involved in the meetings). Hosting the events connected to the Polish Presidency of the EU Council was definitely a good opportunity to advertise a city in both the national and European contexts.

(2) The Europe Prize. The CoE established four awards for local and regional authorities that foster the ideas of European solidarity, identity and cooperation. The list of requirements to receive the award contains elements connected to the EU, which is why this award (organized by a non-EU institution) can be seen as a tool of Europeanization. Since 1993, Polish cities have stood for the competition to win one of the four awards (the main prize, Plaque of Honour, Flag of Honour and Diploma of Honour) and until 2012 they succeeded 157 times (three cities were awarded with the highest prize). Reading through the application forms of the cities one may note the reciprocal character of this Europeanization tool: the Council decided on the set of criteria, but its fulfilment is in the hands of the cities.

Table 4: Europeanization of Polish cities via individual activities

City	ECC 2016*	EURO UEFA 2012	Polish Presidency of the EU Council		Awards of the CoE***	Place in the ranking
			No of diplomatic meetings	cultural programme meetings**		
Warsaw	1	1	21	1	0	1
Wrocław	2	1	10	1	0.5	2
Cracow	0.5	0	12	1	0	3
Poznań	0.5	1	7	1	1	4
Gdańsk	1	1	3	0	0.5	5
Katowice	1	0	0	1	2	6
Lublin	1	0	0	1	1	7
Białystok	0.5	0	0	1	0	8
Łódź	0.5	0	0	0	0.5	9
Bydgoszcz	0.5	0	0	0	0	10
Szczecin	0.5	0	0	0	0	10
Rzeszów	0	0	0	0	0	11

The ranking is obtained by adding up the points from all the categories considered in the table.

\*- 0.5 = participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of competition, 1 = participated in both stages of competition, 2=won the bid.

\*\* 0 = city not included in the official cultural programme, 1 = city included in the official cultural programme

\*\*\* Main prize = 1, plaque, flag, diploma = 0.5 point each.

Source: Author's elaboration based on the information from <http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/committee/ena/europaprize/prizeindex.htm>

The decision on event location is usually made by actors other than city halls. However, for the purpose of the paper, the most important is the mere decision of urban politicians to compete for an event or a title. It often happens that getting an event requires building a true coalition of supporters. This is the case in bidding for the organisation of Eurocities meetings, where a decision on the location is put on vote. Hosting a meeting therefore becomes a sign of successful political marketing conducted by a city within a decisive group. Similarly, being granted other events and awards speaks for urban efficiency on a given political arena.

Just like with network rescaling, we may distinguish two groups here: an active one (five cities on the top of Table 4) and a passive one (last four). Interestingly, in some cases the places in both rankings (compare Table 1 with Figure 1) differ a lot, which can mean either a deliberate strategy of focusing on one type of rescaling, or insufficient resources to occupy similar position in both policies. The examples of first strategy are Wrocław, Cracow and Gdańsk, affluent and big cities that apparently have their preferred type of rescaling (Wrocław and Cracow are individualists, whereas Gdańsk is present in networking). The second explanation works better for Lublin, which seems to do better in the network (where it can use the resources of the whole organisation).

By analysing individual rescaling, it becomes clear that it is often supported by (or interwoven with) political potential deriving from the other two types. This can take numerous forms. First, by organising an event (or bidding for it), a city hall can look for knowledge and expertise among cities that have already had this experience, and quite often it seeks among its twin cities. This is what Polish cities did when competing for the ECC 2016 (e.g. Lublin visited all of its twin cities which were ECC in the past) and organising EURO UEFA 2012 (e.g. Poznań intensified its cooperation with Kharkov). In this way, respective individual and bilateral rescaling strengthen one another. Second, hosting an event is definitely an individual form of rescaling (it serves the host-city and its image directly), but it can stem from a city's network activity. This is the case when a city organises a conference of an organisation, such as Eurocities. The fact of accepting this location by the whole network reveals a strong position of the host in this group.

To conclude, the individual activities related to Europeanization are very diverse and can hardly be given a common denominator. They differ in terms of aims and methods, as well as degree and direction of Europeanization. The prevailing attitude seems to be the top-down approach with

strong determination from the EU as far as the rules and principles are concerned. Nonetheless, some traces of bottom-up initiatives and strategies built because of the EU pressures can also be found instead of simple conformist behaviour.

## 6. Conclusion

Considering Europeanization in terms of outward rescaling (Table 1) is a new analytical approach, not used in previous studies. The research has shown that it allows focusing on the scales (relations) produced between the agents of the European multi-level governance system. In this way, the main element distinguishing types of Europeanization is underscored (we can focus on the direction of relation/influence: top-down or bottom-up). It also provides a tool to study the systems connected by the scale as well. During the analysis of Europeanization of the largest Polish cities, a wide variety of attitudes and methods has been found. Despite being relatively new in the EU context, post-socialist cities happen to not only learn from others and join their initiatives; they also endeavour to make some modifications in the existing structures, making them more suitable for their own means. This bottom-up activity may not always reach the EU institution(s). Nevertheless, it is a promising sign of ambition and interest in widely understood European matters. This, of course, applies above all to the largest and wealthiest cities, which supports the hypothesis on active participation in European initiatives. The activity varies depending on the type (individual activities are the domain of Wrocław, whereas networking is preferred by Poznań and Gdańsk) and specific undertaking (there are cities focusing on Eurocities, like Warsaw and Poznań, and cities more connected to other organizations, e.g. Gdańsk engaged in the Union of Baltic Cities). In general, big cities are much more active in the international networks than other localities (Fuksiewicz et al., 2012), which speaks for their interest in political lobbying and inclination to influence EU affairs (networks give this opportunity in a most certain, direct way). They also tend to consider traditional twinning as a passé method of internationalisation – they prefer project-based, often time-limited cooperation. In individual activities, cities often lean on political potential coming from networks or bilateral agreements. This supports the thesis of a rescaling spillover – activity in one type of outward rescaling is usually supportive of other types.

Unsurprisingly, there is a group of cities still acting passively, remaining at the stage of joining an initiative rather than changing it or taking the lead. Nonetheless, even in this group we may find signs of selective thinking about internationalization, which goes along the hypothesis on strategic rescaling. Regarding the drawbacks in proactive attitude, one has to remember that international activity and political lobbying still pose new possibilities for Polish cities and the learning process is in progress. Moreover, political internationalization is still a »luxury«, a sort of additional activity that can be afforded only by the strongest actors. The engagement of the largest Polish cities in European relations via networking, twinning and individually built position can be interpreted as realization of an ambition that remained suppressed for a long time. After a 'return' to the European community in 1989, recreated territorial governments have eagerly taken up a possibility to act as political and independent actors both in the national and international arenas. This boom of long suppressed ambition explains why, despite a relatively short time, some Polish cities occupy a strong position in the EU multilevel system (with Warsaw mayor being the president of Eurocities at the moment). A deputy mayor of one of the activist cities states has said, »We have to build the consciousness of the largest Polish cities that they are able to influence and shape the EU policies. It is not only states and regions that matter.« This self-confident statement allows assuming that the enthusiastic proposition of Bagnosco and Le Galès (2000) claiming the extension of the space for political manoeuvre for the cities is not as exaggerated as the critics claim it to be.

At the conceptual level, the study results draw our attention to the numerous intersections between the three types of rescaling. Coming back to Table 1, it seems that even though the distinction between network, bilateral and individual actions helps structure the considerations (and finds support in different aims subscribed to each type), in reality mixed types are frequent. This refers to all possible combinations:

- Network-twinning (e.g. a city finds a partner among the members of an organization or – the opposite direction – cooperating cities decide to launch a wider network)
- Twinning-individual activities (e.g. twin-cities offer help in a city's undertakings)
- Network-individual activities (e.g. a city hosts a meeting under an umbrella of a network)

- Network-twinning-individual activities (e.g. award of the EU Council dedicated to individual cities, yet the assessed categories support networking and twinning among European cities).

The research has also shown a phenomenon described with regard to multi-level governance systems, namely the blurring of the distinction between domestic and foreign policies (Hooghe, Marks, 2001: 4). This was visible in all types of investigated action: individual activities (cooperation by hosting events or domestic decisions on hosts of international events), networks (Polish associations reaching the EU institutions), and twinning (solving local, domestic problems by the means of foreign expertise). It turns out that European affairs are so important that they merge and tangle with domestic initiatives. It corresponds to the Zanon's argument (2013) about cities being involved in numerous and overlapping systems. As a result one can think about modifying Table 1 by merging the two rows describing outward rescaling (domestic and European one), at least in the EU context.

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## Appendix

Index of activity in Eurocities comprises four variables:

- Number of fora in which a city participates (weight 0.5 reflects the fact that the mere formal participation in a forum does not speak for activity in its undertakings)
- Number of working groups in which a city participates (for similar reasons the weight is lowered to 0.75; WGs are smaller and more functionally oriented, so free-riding is more difficult than in the case of fora)
- Number of Eurocities events hosted by a city in 2004-2010 (weight 1)
- Chairing or vice-chairing a forum or WG (weight 1)

## POLISH CITIES FACE THE EU: EUROPEANIZATION OF POST-SOCIALIST CITIES AS A TYPE OF OUTWARD POLITICAL RESCALING

### Summary

*Access of Central and East European states to the European Union has opened a new promising field of empirical research for students of European integration. In parallel, a growing body of literature deals with presumably increased space for urban political manoeuvre, linked to the phenomena of de- and renationalisation. Within this approach, the impact of Europeanization on urban politics can be seen as a special type of outward political rescaling. Adopting this perspective, the article analyses the strategies developed by the post-socialist cities faced with the EU political multilevel system, treating them as a part of wider urban strategy of political internationalisation. Three types of rescaling activities are considered: networking, bilateral and individual. The empirical evidence is based on the study of the 12 largest Polish cities, members of Eurocities and domestic lobbying organisations. The character of urban strategies is discussed with reference to the Klijn and Koppenjan's (2000) typology of possible orientation of public authorities faced with global pressures. The main question of the study is what the Europeanization of the largest Polish cities looks like. Are they rather reactive or creative and strategic? Do they undertake any bottom-up actions? The study reveals that the assumed reactive and non-strategic participation of Polish cities in Europeanization is true only to a certain extent. Strategic thinking is visible in the selection of undertaken activities. Creative approach shines through endeavours to modify networks and co-shape bilateral relations in which cities participate. There is a group of biggest cities that contradicts the thesis on a passive attitude of Polish cities towards outward rescaling; despite their short experience in this field, they act as very active and decisive actors on the international scene. The study has also proved that a blur of the distinction between domestic and European scales, presumed in the theories of the EU system, is taking place in Polish reality.*

*Key words: rescaling, internationalization, Europeanization, post-socialist cities, Poland*

## POLJSKI GRADOVI U EUROPSKOJ UNIJI: EUROPEIZACIJA POSTSOCIJALISTIČKIH GRADOVA KAO VRSTA POLITIČKOG RESTRUKTURIRANJA

### Sažetak

Pridruživanje zemalja srednje i istočne Europe Europskoj uniji otvorilo je novo, obećavajuće područje za empirijska istraživanja znanstvenika koji se bave europskim integracijama. Istovremeno raste literatura o sve većem prostoru za političko manevriranje urbanih lokalnih jedinica povezanom s fenomenima denacionalizacije i renacionalizacije. Takav pristup omogućava da učinak europeizacije na urbanu politiku bude shvaćen kao posebna vrsta političkog restrukturiranja okrenutog prema van. Usvajajući to gledište, u radu se analiziraju strategije koje su razvili postsocijalistički gradovi suočeni s višestupanjskim političkim sustavom EU. Njih se smatra dijelom šire urbane strategije političke internacionalizacije. Razmatraju se tri vrste restrukturiranja: individualna, bilateralna i mrežna. Empirijski se podaci temelje na istraživanju 12 najvećih poljskih gradova koji su članovi udruge Eurocities te domaćih lobističkih organizacija. Značenje urbanih strategija razmatra se uz pomoć tipologije mogućih orijentacija javnih vlasti suočenih s globalnim pritiscima koju su razvili Klijn i Koppenjan (2000). Glavno pitanje studije je kako izgleda europeizacija najvećih poljskih gradova. Ponašaju li se oni reaktivno ili kreativno i strateški promišljaju svoj položaj? Poduzimaju li ikakve akcije sami? Istraživanje je pokazalo da je pretpostavka o reaktivnom i nestratičkom sudjelovanju poljskih gradova u europeizaciji tek djelomično točna. Strateško razmišljanje vidljivo je iz izbora poduzetih aktivnosti. Kreativni pristup ogleda se kroz napore da se prilagode mreže i zajednički oblikuju bilateralni odnosi u kojima gradovi sudjeluju. Nadalje, postoji skupina najvećih gradova koja pobija tezu o pasivnom stavu poljskih gradova prema restrukturiranju prema van – unatoč kratkome iskustvu sa spomenutim pitanjima, ti su se gradovi pokazali aktivnim i odlučujućim akterima na međunarodnoj sceni. Istraživanje je pokazalo i to da se razlika između domaćih i europskih mjerila, pretpostavljena u teorijama EU sustava, u Poljskoj smanjuje.

Ključne riječi: restrukturiranje, internacionalizacija, europeizacija, postsocijalistički gradovi, Poljska