

SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

„Town Twinning – international cooperation based on a partnership from the perspective of selected cities with district rights”

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The main aim of the presented doctoral dissertation is a multi-faceted analysis of international partnerships established by cities, examined through the prism of effectiveness, frequency and characteristics of the activities undertaken within town twinning. The analysis applies to four Polish cities with district rights, whose population ranges from 75 000 to a maximum of 99 999 citizens (according to the statistics published by the Central Statistical Office). The cities in question represent different regions and geographical directions of Poland: Nowy Sącz in the south (the Lesser Poland Voivodeship), Grudziądz in the north (the Kuyavian-Pomeranian Voivodeship), Siedlce in the east (the Masovian Voivodeship) and Jelenia Góra in the west of the country (the Lower Silesian Voivodeship). Thereby, it became possible to analyze and ascertain the similarities and differences in the determinants prominent within the international cooperation conducted by the Polish cities which share a similar social potential.

In the doctoral dissertation 5 main hypotheses are advanced:

1. The geographical location of a given city is the main determinant in the process of choosing a city from abroad as a partner.
2. The most commonly undertaken form of partnership cooperation are official visits by town authorities and officers, whereas the rarest form are economic missions.
3. The frequency and intensity of international activities undertaken within twin contacts are gradually reduced with the passage of time.
4. The main effectiveness resulting from international cooperation conducted by cities is the growth of public administration's competence, as well as the realization of youth educational exchanges.
5. The economic effectiveness of international cooperation conducted by towns, defined through the prism of attracted investment and foreign capital, is infinitesimal.

The scope of the analysis also encompasses a number of detailed research questions, concerning: the establishment and maintenance of relationships, contacts and friendships between local communities through international cooperation conducted by local government units; the real activities undertaken within international cooperation conducted by local government units; the instruments in the possession of local government units suitable for successive maintenance and deepening of interpersonal relations and social contacts between citizens as a part of international cooperation; the commitment of citizens displayed through their engagement in different international activities, as well as their willingness to build relations with inhabitants of foreign twin towns; the main beneficiary of partnership cooperation between local government units; the major potential benefits gained for citizens thanks to town twinning.

The doctoral dissertation contains: an introduction, seven chapters, a conclusion, an annex and bibliography. The first chapter comprises theoretical reflections on the definition of the term of town, including sociological, legal and town-planning perspectives. Moreover, some basic information about urban sociology is considered, as well as the political perspective of a town, including: the tasks and the legal basis of town functioning on the grounds of the key national and international legal regulations; the political approach of the European Union towards urban development; the aspect of joining unions by cities on the international ground.

The second chapter includes an analysis of the Polish and European town twinning history, the directions of cooperation from the spatiotemporal angle, and the priority fields of cooperation and activities. Moreover, the examinations in the chapter are focus on the most important, from the author's point of view, documents and legal international and EU regulations in the area of international cooperation conducted by local government units. Also, the formal and informal basis of town twinning is analysed, especially partnership agreements, letters of intent and cooperation on projects. A particular attention is given to the governmental foreign policy priorities, adopted in 2012 by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Poland, as well as to the matter of financing the activities undertaken within international cooperation conducted by local government units.

The third chapter presents the characteristics of international partnership cooperation conducted by the town of Nowy Sącz, including an analysis of the scope of the legal basis, the intensity of the cooperation, the undertaken activities and the project financed from external financial sources, with each foreign self-government partner of Nowy Sącz. Chapter no. 4 *per analogiam* includes an analysis of partnership cooperation conducted by the town of

Grudziądz. The town of Siedlce was taken into account in the fifth chapter, whereas the town of Jelenia Góra was examined in the sixth chapter.

Chapter no. 7 provides an analysis of the realization of public tasks by Non-Governmental Organisations, with the use of the participation instruments defined in the Act of 24th April 2003 on Public Benefit Activity and Volunteerism. Moreover, the chapter offers a comparative analysis of the international partnership cooperation conducted by selected cities possessing district rights, as well as an assessment of chances, possibilities, limits and challenges arising from town twinning.

The conclusion of the dissertation includes a summary of all reflections on international partnership cooperation conducted by cities possessing district rights. The most important part of it is the reference to all hypotheses and research questions included in the introduction. The author only partly confirms first research hypothesis – it is recognized that the geographical location of a city is an important, but not crucial determinant responsible for the choice made by a Polish town as regards geographical directions of international partnership cooperation. Second, the hypothesis concerning the most commonly undertaken form of partnership cooperation, as well as the fifth hypothesis regarding the economic effectiveness of that cooperation, are confirmed in full. On the other hand, the third hypothesis is not confirmed at all. The analysis, which were carried out, show that the time passage is not a factor, which has an influence on the frequency and intensity of international activities undertaken within twin contacts. There are a lot of examples of long-lasting and fruitful twin-town contacts, which refute the assumptions stated in that third hypothesis. Another unconfirmed hypothesis is the aspect of main effectiveness resulting from international cooperation conducted by cities. The growth of public administration's competence is not as important as it was in the nineties. What is more, nowadays it is not a frequently undertaken activity within international partnership cooperation anymore. The conclusion of the dissertation also includes personal deductions on contemporary times and the future of international cooperation conducted by cities.

The analysis included in the dissertation allows to recognize the essence, history and characteristics of each twin and partnership contacts. What is more, an in depth evaluation is made on all the research problems concerning international cooperation conducted by cities, as well as on the specificity of that cooperation with regard to spatiotemporal parameters.

The effects of the conducted analysis presented in the dissertation have measurable social consequences, which allow practical usage of the knowledge acquired during the conducted research. Knowing all the cause-and-effect circumstances in regard to the

establishment of international partnerships by cities, makes it possible to select proper instruments for the realisation of the set objectives within international partnership cooperation. What is more, the results from the activities undertaken by the cities in the international area, can also be predicted.