

URBANE RÄUME

URBAN AREAS

BETWEEN INITIATION AND SATURATION. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOWN TWINNING IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE ON THE EXAMPLE OF POLAND

Stefania ŚRODA-MURAWSKA, Leszek S. DĄBROWSKI,
and Paweł SMOLIŃSKI (all Toruń, Poland)*

*Initial submission / erste Einreichung: 02/2024; revised submission / revidierte Fassung: 12/2024;
final acceptance / endgültige Annahme: 01/2025*

with 10 figures and 1 table in the text

CONTENTS

<i>Summary</i>	146
<i>Zusammenfassung</i>	146
1 Introduction	146
2 Historical Context of Town Twinning in CEE and Poland	149
3 Conceptual Framework: Europeanisation, Globalisation, and Town Twinning	150
4 Methodology	153
5 Results: Patterns and Trends in Town Twinning in Poland	157
5.1 Geographic Patterns of Cooperation	157
5.2 Dynamics of Cooperation over Time	162
5.3 Case Studies: Differentiating International City Cooperation	164
6 Discussion: Implications for CEE and Beyond	166
7 Conclusion	170
8 References	171

* Prof. Dr. habil. Stefania ŚRODA MURAWSKA, M.Sc., University Professor, Department of Urban Studies and Regional Development, Nicolaus Copernicus University, ul. Lwowska 1, 87-100 Toruń, Poland; Leszek S. DĄBROWSKI, Ph.D., and Paweł SMOLIŃSKI, M.Sc., both: Interdisciplinary Doctoral School of Social Sciences, Nicolaus Copernicus University, ul. W. Bojarskiego 1, 87-100 Toruń, Poland. – Emails: steffi@umk.pl, l.dabrowski@abs.umk.pl, p.smolinski@doktorant.umk.pl.

Summary

This article focuses on the analysis of the development of town twinning in East-Central and Eastern Europe (CEE countries) on the example of Poland. The study aimed to determine how the dimensions of intercity cooperation support the processes of Europeanisation and globalisation of a CEE country over the years in the face of major geopolitical events. We analysed the post-1945 partnerships of all 181 medium-sized towns in Poland. We used a triangulation of research methods, including quantitative and qualitative ones, to obtain more effective results. In the context of globalisation and Europeanisation, we proposed distinguishing three characteristic phases: initiation, development, and saturation. The recently growing phenomenon of untwining was also identified.

Keywords: Town twinning, sister cities, post-socialist country, Central and Eastern Europe, Poland

Zusammenfassung

ZWISCHEN INITIIERUNG UND SÄTTIGUNG. DIE ENTWICKLUNG VON STÄDTEPARTNERSCHAFTEN IN MITTEL- UND OSTEUROPA AM BEISPIEL POLENS

Dieser Artikel befasst sich mit der Analyse der Entwicklung von Städtepartnerschaften in Ostmittel- und Osteuropa (MOE bzw. CEE-Staaten) am Beispiel Polens. Ziel der Studie war es, zu untersuchen, wie die unterschiedlichen Ausformungen und Konzepte der zwischenstädtischen Zusammenarbeit die Prozesse der Europäisierung und Globalisierung eines MOE-Landes im Lauf der Jahre und angesichts großer geopolitischer Ereignisse unterstützen. In diesem Sinn analysierte das Autorenteam die Städtepartnerschaften aller 181 mittelgroßen Städte in Polen nach 1945 unter Verwendung unterschiedlicher Erhebungs- und Analyseansätze, einschließlich quantitativer und qualitativer Methoden, um effektivere Ergebnisse zu erzielen. Im Kontext der Globalisierung und Europäisierung können drei charakteristische Phasen der Entwicklung von Städtepartnerschaften unterschieden werden: Initiierung, Entwicklung und Sättigung. Außerdem wurde als in letzter Zeit zunehmendes – gegenläufiges – Phänomen auch eine gewisse Entflechtung identifiziert.

Schlagwörter: Städtepartnerschaften, Schwesterstädte, postsozialistische Staaten, Mittel- und Osteuropa, CEE-Staaten, Polen

1 Introduction

The idea of establishing partnerships between cities in their current form appeared as a result of the experience of the drama of World War II. The damaged building stock and infrastructure of many cities and the traumatic experiences of societies brought about the need for partnerships across Europe. The process of creating links between cities in this part of the world was not only to prevent future conflicts but also to help rebuild and

regenerate cities through the exchange of experience and cooperation (ZELINSKY 1991; GROSSPIETSCH 2009; BRAKMAN et al. 2016; JAYNE et al. 2017).

It should be noted that the idea of twinning has a long tradition, whereby the first ever official city association was the formal partnership between the cities of Bristol (UK) and Hanover (Germany) (DE VILLIERS et al. 2007) and the partnership between Montbéliard (France) and Ludwigsburg (Germany) (ZELINSKY 1991), both concluded in 1947.

Although the cooperation of European cities has a tradition spanning more than 70 years, the different geopolitical situation after 1945 resulted in a divergent development of international contacts of Western and Eastern European countries. As COUPERUS and VRHOCI (2019) note, establishing international contacts between cities of Western and Eastern European countries between 1945 and 1989 was extremely difficult. On the one hand, Western local authorities perceived cities of the CEE countries as a threat due to the potential influence of communist thought through the exchange of residents. On the other hand, communist authorities also showed no desire to establish partnerships with Western cities (COUPERUS and VRHOCI 2019).

It should be emphasised that local authorities played a secondary role in the twinning process for CEE cities that established international cooperation (PASZTOR and JAROSZ 2018). Decisions were made by state and party institutions. In this area, twinning developed through the “World Federation of Twin Cities”, established in 1957, and later outside its structures. In the CEE countries, all international relations were strictly controlled at the central level. There was a noticeable difference in these relations when comparing the twinned cities of the so-called “real socialist” countries and those of Western Europe. The former was developed more willingly to the limited contacts with the latter (PASZTOR and JAROSZ 2018). Poland was an example of a country that found itself in the socialist bloc under the protectorate of the Soviet Union (USSR).

As BEAUVOIS et al. (2000) and ANTONYUK (2018) point out, the region of East-Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), comprising countries such as Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, as well as Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine, which later emerged as a result of the break-up of the USSR, is special due to historical and cultural links. Therefore, as KŁOCZOWSKI (2004) explains, CEE is a specific region, bringing together countries with historical and economic similarities that depended on the Soviet bloc during the Cold War.

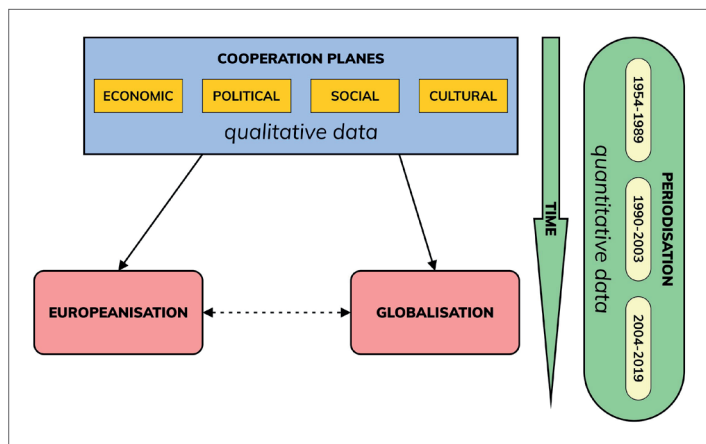
The development of town twinning in Poland is particularly interesting because of the geopolitical situation after the end of the Second World War. Firstly, due to the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989 and the simultaneous opening up to Western flows: As BUSSMANN and NICKEL (2018, p. 281) describe: “The fall of the Iron Curtain opened avenues for the establishment of new contacts after 1989/1990.” Secondly, due to the strong European integration crowned by the European Union (EU) accession of Poland in 2004. Both events allowed for the emergence and development of processes of Europeanisation and globalisation and the integration of a post-socialist country into the free world, through the development of town twinning.

Therefore, the analysis of the development of the twinning process in Polish cities allows us to indicate the general trends and features that characterise a post-socialist

country in the context of establishing international cooperation after World War II. It seems that the fact of the functioning of CEE countries after 1945 in the realities of a centrally planned and Soviet-controlled economy and similar transformation processes that took place after 1989 in the CEE countries allow us to assume that in terms of the development of twinning, Polish cities may constitute an exemplification of the situation in CEE countries.

This study aimed to determine how the dimensions of intercity cooperation support the processes of Europeanisation and globalisation of a CEE country over the years in the face of major geopolitical events (end of the Second World War, collapse of the USSR, accession to the European Union). We used a quantitative data set that identifies many twinning arrangements within a nation to determine changes over time in terms of the dynamics and directions of cooperation, while a qualitative data set was used to analyse the dimensions of cooperation.

To achieve our goal, we took two main steps. First, we reviewed important strands of literature on the history of the town twinning movement in CEE countries on the example of Poland, Europeanisation and globalisation, and analysed the interfaces of town twinning. On this basis, we made a second step, which concerned the conceptualisation of the three previously mentioned strands (see Figure 1). This allowed us to capture the relationship between the cooperation planes and the processes of Europeanisation and globalisation over time.



Source: Authors. Own design

Figure 1: Conceptualisation of the study

The aim of the study set in this way made it possible to complete and organise the knowledge concerning the development of town twinning in CEE. So far, there have been no in-depth studies on town twinning from the perspective of a post-socialist country only (LANGENOHL 2015). Poland's status is a representative example for many CEE countries

in terms of twinning. Moreover, the proposed phases of town twinning in CEE sort out the historical development concerning the process of Europeanisation and globalisation. In addition, the study will show the potential development paths of town twinning after a country regains its independence.

Europeanisation, globalisation and city twinning are key elements in the analysis of the twinning process in Poland and the CEE countries. The conceptual framework used in the study links these processes, showing their intertwining and influence on the development of inter-city cooperation.

2 Historical Context of Town Twinning in CEE and Poland

Within the framework of the countries “associated” with the Eastern Bloc, Polish cities after 1945 concluded partnership agreements, mostly imposed from above by the political apparatus, which in principle did not lead to real cooperation. It means that no joint action was taken between the cities (KALITTA 2008). In Poland, the first state-controlled town twinning began to form in the mid-1950s when large Polish cities began to establish contacts with cities in the Eastern Bloc from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and the USSR. Twin city unions were controlled using the state apparatus, and the contacts themselves were often meetings of communist party members (FURMANKIEWICZ 2004). In the 1970s, Polish cities were allowed to establish contacts with municipalities from Western European capitalist countries, e.g., Belgium, France, or the former Federal Republic of Germany (FURMANKIEWICZ 2004), but these contacts were strictly controlled (NIJANDER-DUDZIŃSKA 2014).

In the next decade, Poland’s borders were closed as a result of the introduction of martial law in 1981, which resulted in the complete disappearance of international contacts at the local government level.

It was not until the turn of the 1990s (the period of system transformation in Poland) that significant changes were brought about. Polish cities, gaining independence by creating their own partnership policy, started to establish new partnerships. A significant upsurge in this process was noted at that time (NIJANDER-DUDZIŃSKA 2014). Another important event was Poland’s accession to the European Union in 2004, which had two crucial consequences in the context of twinning. The first is the transformation of the importance of partnerships for individual cities. While before Poland’s accession to the European Union, Polish cities were beneficiaries of broadly understood material and administrative assistance from their *Western twins*, in recent years Polish local governments have become mentors for cities from Eastern Europe, offering support in the field of municipal management, municipal economy, or social assistance (SZEWCZYK 2007; KALITTA 2008).

At the same time, Poland’s accession to the EU strengthened city diplomacy in independent policy, including the international arena. The number of concluded partnerships confirms this – Polish cities are among the most active in Europe, just behind French and German municipalities (Council of European Municipalities and Regions 2010). The process of Europeanisation could, therefore, proceed dynamically. In this initial stage,

geographical distance was the dominant factor in establishing agreements. Another consequence is a drop in the dynamics of establishing partnerships two years after the EU accession (the saturation phase) and a change in the directions of establishing cooperation (e.g., with Asian cities). It seems that the EU accession influenced the credibility of Polish cities as potential partners in the international arena. In such a case, Europeanisation accelerated globalisation in the twinning of Polish cities.

3 Conceptual Framework: Europeanisation, Globalisation, and Town-Twinning

As GROSSPIETSCH (2009) notes, town twinning is a concept that is difficult to define due to its complex structure, covering a broad spectrum of activities. In general, twinning can be referred to the establishment of official or social relations between two local government units (AKMAN 2016; UNKOVSKI-KORICA 2021), most often between towns (GROSSPIETSCH 2009). It is a certain social movement (LOFLAND 1989; ZELINSKY 1991; GROSSPIETSCH 2009) through which long-term relations between cities are established and practised (ZELINSKY 1991). Today, twinning is not only the creation of cooperative agreements to promote economic, cultural and educational ties (JAYNE et al. 2013; BURKSIENE et al. 2020; FULCHER 2021) but also the production of proximity between geographically distant cities (CLARKE 2011; GABARTA 2021) beyond national borders (BRAKMAN et al. 2016; HU et al. 2021; RYAN and MAZZILLI 2021).

When considering town twinning from the perspective of CEE cities, we must place this process in the context of Europeanisation and globalisation, which strongly shaped the emerging democracies in CEE after 1989. Europeanisation is defined as “the way the EU affects institutions, norms, and practices inside the member states” (DIMITROVA 2002, p. 172). There are three types of Europeanisations: European integration, bottom-up Europeanisation, and top-down Europeanisation (RADAELLI 2005, p. 60). The last type of Europeanisation particularly concerns the CEE countries and manifests itself as the imposition of different types of policies by the EU on the member states (LIGHTFOOT 2010). This is also reflected in town-twinning – the EU supports cooperation between cities through programmes (LANGENOHL 2015; PINTSCH 2020) such as INTERREG (PŁOSZAJ 2013), from which large amounts of funding can be obtained (BINEK et al. 2016). Thus, the EU considers town twinning supported by EU funds an important element of European integration (JOENNIEMI and SERGUNIN 2011). Similar conclusions are reached by JAŃCZAK (2017), who observes that the main factor shaping twinning is the process of continental integration. Thus, Europeanisation in town twinning is mainly due to the created environment (fund, legal, and political) by the European Union (JAŃCZAK 2017).

Different terms for Europeanisation are used depending on the adopted model of cooperation between twinned cities. Thus, a model based on bottom-up Europeanisation is understood as a partnership established as a result of economic or social cooperation (GIULIANI 2000; BOERZEL 2003; ALECU DE FLERS and MÜLLER 2010; MCCAULEY 2011; WACH 2015). Top-down Europeanisation is characterised by the establishment of all modes of cooperation as a result of Poland’s accession to the EU, as evidenced by the significant in-

crease in the number of partnerships, especially in the Central European region (BOERZEL 2003; DELLA PORTA and CAIANI 2006; BANDOV and KOLMAN 2018).

The importance of the Europeanisation process was also indicated by the initial definitions of town twinning, which were Eurocentric in nature. KONRAD (1982) considers twinning to be an established relationship of friendship between towns in different countries, aimed at creating a sense of European community and unity. This approach is inadequate today due to globalisation, which has allowed twinning to spread worldwide (GROSSPIETSCH 2009).

In the context of twinning in Poland, Europeanisation has created an institutional and financial framework for strengthening inter-city ties in Europe. Thus, on the one hand, the increased importance of the European Union and the addition of more member states at the beginning of the 21st century has allowed for even more European integration using town twinning (GROSSPIETSCH 2009). On the other hand, due to strong globalisation movements, definitions of town twinning take into account the process of globalisation (DE VILLIERS et al. 2007). As CHUNG and MASCITELLI (2008) point out, globalisation enables a broader spectrum of cooperation activities between cities than ever before. Moreover, it makes cooperation with cities in the most remote parts of the world possible. This is confirmed by the estimates of BONTENBAL and VAN LINDERT (2009), who show that nearly 70 percent of cities worldwide are involved in cooperation initiatives.

Despite the dominant role of economic globalisation in global flows (BEAUREGARD 1995), it is not the only one that matters in city-to-city cooperation. In recent years we have seen the so-called globalisation of care (CLARKE 2008), whereby twinning can be a tool for distance care (CLARKE 2011). The “globalisation of care” is understood as spreading outreach activities through city partnerships (CLARKE 2009; YEATES 2009; KONTOS 2010; JAYNE et al. 2017). Already defined by researchers, this process refers to the spread of health, political and economic care along the lines of the globalisation phenomenon, which is fundamentally responsible for its spread. Thus, globalisation in town twinning can be a process that supports the implementation of multi-level cooperation (CLARKE 2011).

Town twinning should be considered in four intertwined planes: economic, political, social, and cultural (DĄBROWSKI 2020). Thus, the dimensions of town twinning are identical to the dimensions of Europeanisation indicated in the definition proposed by HIRSCHHAUSEN and PATEL (2010, p. 2): “We understand Europeanization as a variety of political, social, economic and cultural processes that promote (or modify) a sustainable strengthening of intra-European connections.” Furthermore, as PALMOWSKI (2011, p. 634) emphasises, “the contemporary history of the European state is marked by the regional, national, transnational and supranational entanglement of its politics, economics, society and culture”. Consequently, it can be assumed that in the case of the CEE cities, the individual dimensions of Europeanisation came into being and were strengthened to a large extent through the process of town twinning.

The *economic* sphere focuses on supporting the economic growth of cities or establishing trade relations between them (McLARTY et al. 2014). One example is the numerous partnerships between Chinese and Australian (O'TOOLE 2000; CHUNG and MASCITELLI 2008) or New Zealand cities (CROSS 2010), aiming to enter new markets.

An important level of cooperation is *politics*, especially local politics. The idea of partnerships in this aspect focuses on the exchange of local authorities' experiences in the city management field (CLARKE 2009). Cities from higher developed countries support cities from less developed countries. This support is mainly institutional, in terms of service provision, policy-making and organisational and financial management (BONTENBAL 2009; 2010).

The *social* plane, on the other hand, takes various forms, including the exchange of knowledge and experience between formal and informal organisations, as well as social education (CREMER et al. 2001). One example of such cooperation is the North-South partnership which developed in the early 1980s (ZELINSKY 1991). Highly developed northern hemisphere cities became guides and offered social support to underdeveloped regions of the global South (BAYCAN-LEVENT et al. 2006; BONTENBAL 2009). There are studies showing that town twinning is an effective way to transfer knowledge between cities from different corners of the world, which effectively influences the development of their social capital (BUCKLEY et al. 2015).

Among the indicated levels, the most developed is the sphere of *cultural* cooperation which includes the exchange of various social groups (ZELINSKY 1991). This opportunity for residents to work together supports their understanding of the diversity of cultures (GROSSPIETSCH 2009; JOENNIEMI and SERGUNIN 2011). More still, as LIU and VINCE (1999) point out, such collaboration has cultural awareness and exchange as its primary goal. Research by BAYCAN-LEVENT et al. (2008) on Euro cities members proved that, following the conclusion of partnership agreements, the number of visitors and cultural activities at transnational level increased by 50 percent, both in the analysed centres and in their sister cities (BAYCAN-LEVENT et al. 2008).

Such a view of the twinning phenomenon – through the prism of Europeanisation and globalisation – finds solid justification in its historical development and contemporary relations between cities. Europeanisation provides the institutional framework that supports twinning and underpins the values and goals that guide inter-city cooperation. Globalisation, on the other hand, takes twinning to a global level, addressing the needs of contemporary cities in the face of growing economic, social and cultural interdependence.

This approach – focusing on Europeanisation and globalisation – allows us to understand better the multidimensional nature of twinning and its significance in a changing world. The process of Europeanisation gives the phenomenon a regional context, globalises the importance of integration within Europe, where cooperation between cities plays a key role in shaping interactions and influences local and regional policies. Globalisation, on the other hand, shows how twinning transcends continental boundaries, becoming part of broader global networks that enable cities to support each other in building sustainable, balanced development.

Framing twinning through the prism of these two processes is consistent with the historical and current context of the phenomenon and takes into account its future potential. Europeanisation and globalisation point the way forward for intercity cooperation, which constantly evolves in response to the needs of local communities and global challenges. This approach highlights the strategic importance of twinning in building a more integrated, cooperative, and sustainable world.

4 Methodology

The conceptual framework adopted (see Fig. 1) shaped the research process and included several levels to address the complexity of the phenomenon. To achieve the research objectives, a mixed-methods approach was employed, integrating quantitative data to capture the dynamics and evolution of town twinning over time with qualitative insights into the socio-cultural and political dimensions of inter-city cooperation. This combined approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, reflecting its multidimensional nature and aligning with the framework's emphasis on Europeanisation and globalisation.

In general, medium-sized towns receive far little attention in the literature, as highlighted by CARDOSO and MEIJERS (2016), SERVILLO et al. (2017) or SÝKORA and MULÍČEK (2017), even though they play a vital role in the sustainable development of a country or region. Meanwhile, the largest cities due to their size and the specificity of their functioning nationally and globally are the subject of enormous research in various scientific fields. Similarly, small towns, whose scale and importance for local development are so important that numerous analyses are devoted to them. In contrast, medium-sized towns, often isolated from the main settlement networks, are the backbone of the whole economy (SASSEN 2018). Moreover, it was medium-sized towns in Poland, as a result of the economic transformation based on heavy industry, that were the first to face the challenge of creating a mechanism to prevent problems in society, leading to the initiation of multifaceted cooperation with cities, mainly from Western Europe (CASTELLS 1993; GRAHAM et al. 1996; SASSEN 2018). The analysed group of towns accounted for 19.8 percent of the total number of towns in Poland and 19.2 percent of the total population. Thus, considering the set of all medium-sized towns, it seems that this may be a representative sample for determining the characteristics of twinning in Poland.

There are numerous discrepancies in the literature due to the multiplicity of nomenclature of medium-sized cities; the terms town and city are used interchangeably (KNOX and MAYER 2013; CARDOSO and MEIJERS 2016; KORCELLI-OLEJNICZAK et al. 2017; SERVILLO et al. 2017; Atkinson 2019; ŚRODA-MURAWSKA 2020). The size criterion is a frequent example of differentiation in using the terms town and city. Traditionally, 'town' refers to a smaller urban centre, characterised by less developed infrastructure and a smaller population than a 'city'. In contrast, 'city' refers to larger, more developed administrative and economic centres. In many countries, strict size standards are conditioning the correctness of the term used; however, as researchers point out, defining an administrative unit should be approached more holistically, looking at its socio-economic impact (NORMAN 2010; LOO and CHENG 2010; KONECKA-SZYDŁOWSKA 2014; KWIATEK-SOLTYS 2015; RUNGE 2016; HAMDouch et al. 2017; SENETRA and SZAREK-IWANIUK 2020).

The urban planning literature emphasises that 'city' and 'town' also differ in the functions performed in the socio-economic structure. LEFEBVRE (1996) points out that the 'city' performs functions of global importance related to integration into the world system, while the 'town' has a relatively local character. BRENNER (2004) takes a similar view, emphasising that the status of the 'city' goes beyond a simple demographic category, and also includes the role of an administrative and cultural centre (LEFEBVRE 1996; BRENNER

2004; SCHMID 2013; KIPFER et al. 2008; Storper and Scott 2016; BRENNER and SCHMID 2017; LEARY-OWHIN and MCCARTHY 2019).

In the contemporary context, globalisation and the development of urban networks have contributed to blurring the boundaries between 'city' and 'town'. However, academic and administrative documents maintain a precise distinction between these terms, which allows for a more accurate study of urbanisation processes (BATTEN 1995; SASSEN 1996; SHORT et al. 2000; CASTELLS 2002; DERUDDER et al. 2003; SASSEN 2004; ROBINSON 2011; TAYLOR et al. 2011; NEWMAN and THORNLEY 2011; FARÍAS and BENDER 2012).

Due to the nature of the partnerships described, the authors decided to use the concept of a town in the study, which corresponds better with small and medium-sized cities and is a concept commonly used about the numerous considerations of partnerships about European cities (VION 2002; FURMANKIEWICZ 2005; GROSSPIETSCH 2009; CLARKE 2011; BRAKMAN et al. 2016; JOENNIEMI and JAŃCZAK 2017).

We used content analysis for this purpose. Web searches were conducted in Polish using the terms "*town twinning*", "*partner cities*", "*international cooperation + name of the city*" using the Google search engine. The first 20 retrievals for each term (and the city) were reviewed. In most cases data were obtained from the official websites of Polish towns. In other cases, data was obtained from the local online press. In total, over 3,000 websites were screened. While obtaining information on the partners of Polish towns, we also determined the year in which a given partnership was established. In total, 927 dates (partnerships) were obtained and collated. This allowed us to determine the development over time (periodisation) of the twinning process in the context of Europeanisation and globalisation and to prepare graphs showing the number of partnerships established after World War II.

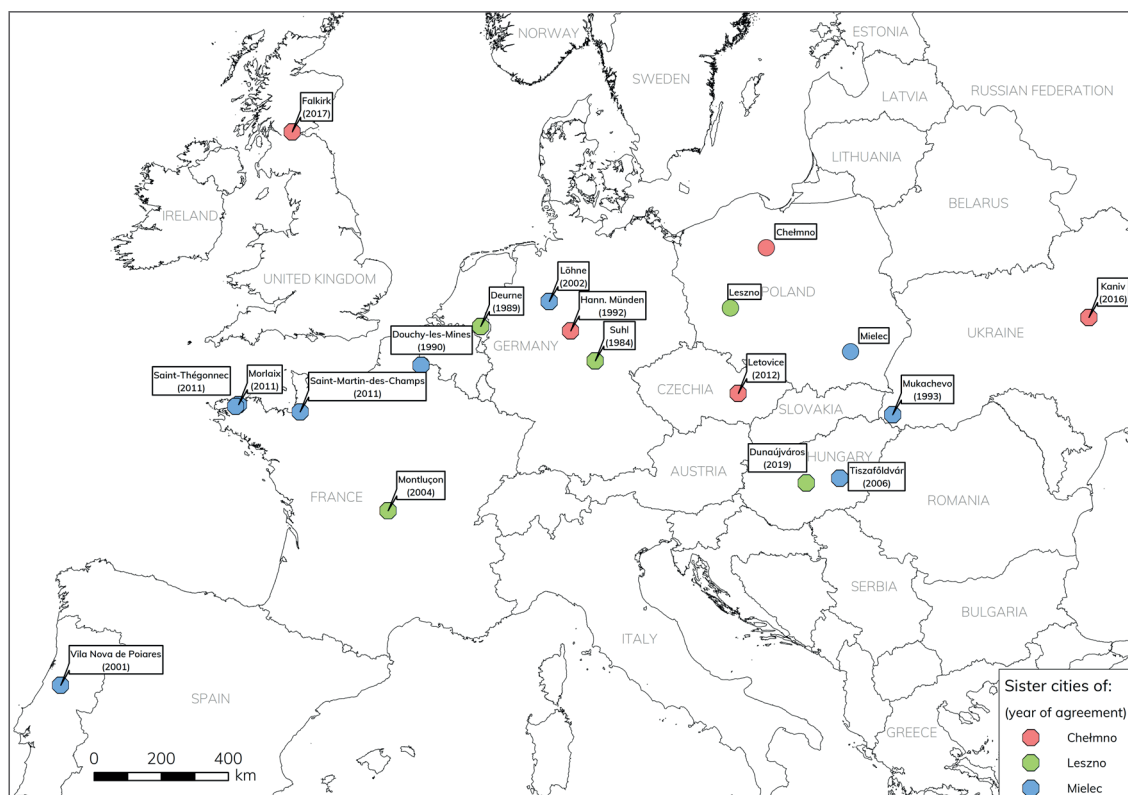
To distinguish the phases of town twinning for the analysed area, in the next stage we determined the dominant spatial directions of partnerships established at the level of individual countries in the determined periods (until 1989, 1990–2003, 2004–2019). The division of the periods was based on significant historical events, i.e., the fall of the USSR and the Iron Curtain (1989/1990) and Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004. This stage of the study was related to the need to verify the commonly accepted assumption that, geographically, twin towns are characterised by the so-called 'neighbourhood effect', meaning that towns choose as their twin towns those that are geographically accessible and culturally coherent (BRAKMAN et al. 2016). The presented study proposed an analysis of countries' involvement in the established partnership agreements. Additionally, dominant directions of establishing partnerships were determined for the analysed group of towns in particular periods.

Furthermore, while conducting content analysis on Polish towns' partners, we also diagnosed the process of untwinning. To complete the image of twinning in CEE countries, we also decided to use content analysis to investigate untwinning. We obtained data on why twinning agreements were broken and the years this occurred. In contrast to town twinning data, we obtained information on all Polish cities at the stage of collecting data on untwinning. For this purpose, we made web searches in Polish using the terms "*termination of partnerships with Polish cities*", "*breaking up partnerships with Polish towns*" using the Google search engine. The first 50 retrievals for each term were reviewed. A total of

100 websites were screened. Data on untwinning was sourced from online editions of nationwide newspapers and local websites.

It should be emphasised that the collected data on town twinning were gathered from official municipality websites or, where information could not be obtained, from the local online press. These are highly reliable data sources. However, collecting data from such sources always implies the risk that the data may be out of date. Nevertheless, we have made every effort to ensure that the dataset is as up-to-date and reliable as possible, so we have screened over 3,000 websites. The same applies to untwinning.

As the town twinning should also be analysed in the context of space and is often overlooked in considerations, the distances of individual twinning from a given town in Poland were determined. The calculated distances allow us to determine whether geographical proximity is still an important factor influencing cooperation (ZELINSKY 1991; BAYCAN-LEVENT et al. 2006; FALKENHAIM et al. 2012) or whether nowadays, in a globalised world, it is no longer relevant (KALTENBRUNNER et al. 2013).



Source: Own elaboration. Own design

Figure 2: Sister cities of the three Polish cities of Mielec, Chelmino and Leszno selected for in-depth analysis

Additionally, to identify the significance of the idea of sister cities for Polish towns, interviews were conducted with representatives of municipal offices and companies in the three towns selected for the study: Mielec, Chełmno and Leszno (cf. Figure 2).

The main task was to confront the very idea of establishing cooperation with its practical functioning in the social and economic life of the examined towns over the years. The list of respondents is presented in Table 1.

Offices	
Chełmno	Representative of the Chełmno Municipal Office
Leszno	Representative of the Leszno Municipal Office
Mielec	Representative of the Mielec Municipal Office
Companies	
Leszno	Representative of Leszczyńskie Centrum Biznesu Sp. z o.o.
Mielec	Representative of BURY Sp. z o.o.

Source: Own interviews

Table 1: List of respondents interviewed in the three Polish cities selected for in-depth analysis

The interviews in both cases were semi-structured and were conducted in 2019. The questionnaire for interviewing officials consisted of 15 questions. They concerned the forms of cooperation, the nature of involvement of particular social groups in cooperation between towns, and the advantages and disadvantages of participating in the idea of sister cities. The interviews were conducted in person at the offices and lasted 30 to 60 minutes. The company questionnaire consisted of seven questions covering the cooperation issues of companies within the framework of sister cities. The conversations with the representatives of the companies were carried out by telephone – their duration was about 20–30 minutes.

The consent to conduct the interview was given by Leszczyńskie Centrum Biznesu Sp. z o.o. located in Leszno. The company's objective is to stimulate the social and economic development of the city and the subregion and support entrepreneurship and the competitiveness and innovation of existing enterprises. Consent was also received from Bury Sp. z o.o., the Polish branch of the German company Bury GmbH & Co. KG, which is one of the leading manufacturers and suppliers of hands-free sets and telephone holder systems for the automotive sector. The company has four locations and employs over 2,000 people, including about 450 engineers. The Mielec houses the Production and Logistics Department, Quality Control Department, Prototype Construction Department, and Tool Construction Department, with over 1,800 qualified employees.

The collected data enabled the authors to identify the scale of networking of Polish towns and to determine the evolution of the idea of sister cities in post-socialist countries on the example of Poland.

The paper adopts an analytical framework that integrates Europeanisation, globalisation and urban cooperation. Europeanisation was included as a top-down and bottom-up process of shaping town cooperation, and globalisation as the extension of these activities beyond the borders of Europe, enabling international transfers of knowledge, resources and values (CLARKE 2008).

The structure adopted for the analysis takes into account three phases in the development of intercity cooperation: *initiation* (1954–1989), *development* (1990–2003) and *saturation* (2004–2019). These phases were determined by key historical events such as the fall of the Iron Curtain and Poland's accession to the European Union. Each of the phases is characterised by different dynamics and directions of cooperation, which allows for a multifaceted view of the phenomenon under study.

5 Results: Patterns and Trends in Town Twinning in Poland

5.1 Geographic Patterns of Cooperation

When assessing the scale of the analysed phenomenon it should be noted that as many as 174 out of the surveyed 181 Polish cities, i.e., 96 percent, have twin towns. However, taking into account the twinning ratio (number of partnerships per 10,000 inhabitants) ranging from 0.13 to 4.48, it can be indicated that the town's most active in entering into partnerships (per 10,000 inhabitants) are located in central and southern Poland (cf. Figure 3).

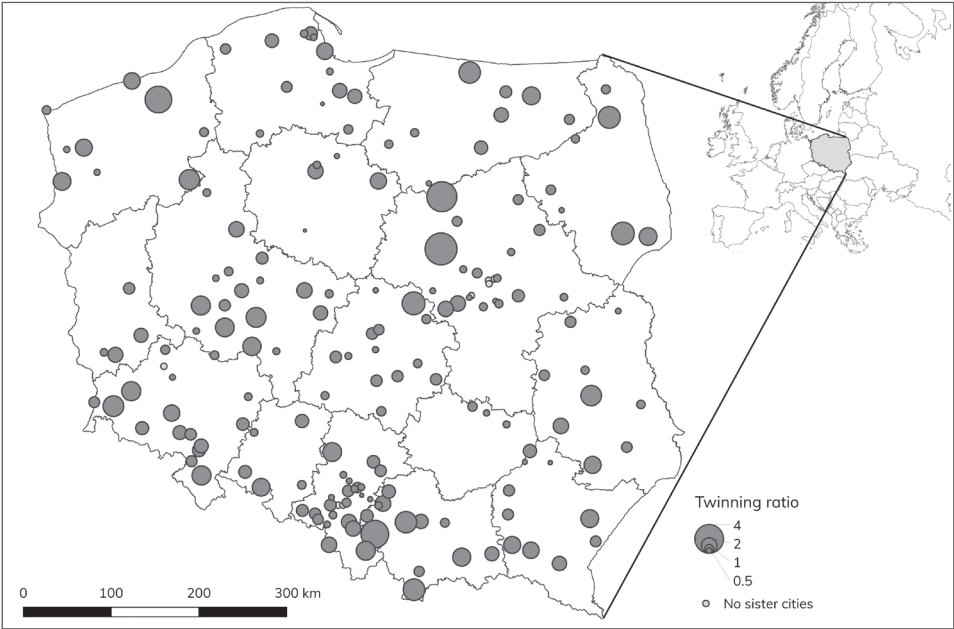
Taking into account the distance between twin towns, it averaged 932 km (the median distance is 640 km). The shortest distance (1 km) separates Polish Zgorzelec from German Görlitz (border towns) and the longest combines Polish Jelenia Góra with Mexican Tequila (9,203 km). Figure 4 shows the distribution of established partnerships by the distance between towns. Polish towns establish most relationships with towns from their closest geographical area (up to 500 km).

In the initial phase of establishing city-region partnerships, the capacity to establish contacts with towns outside the European region needed to be improved. This is perfectly visible in the following figures (cf. Figure 5). The underdeveloped international contacts of Poland-World relations determined the establishment of partnerships on a neighbourhood basis, so partnerships were concentrated in the European space.

The situation was different after 1989 (cf. Figure 6) and when Poland became part of the EU (cf. Figure 7 and Figure 8) when the number of new partnerships increased due to numerous contacts.

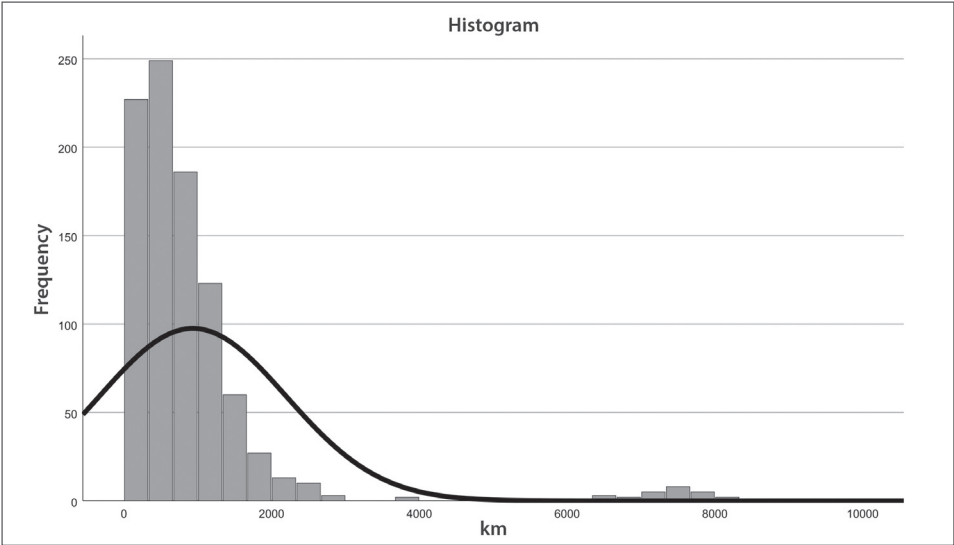
The dynamics of the examined phenomenon in the case of Polish towns, on the other hand, indicate clear stages and trends in establishing cooperation. Thus, until 1989, the cooperation of towns was limited to a small group of 34 cities selected by the authorities and confined to the nearest geographical area (cf. Figure 9).

The end of the Cold War marked the formation of a new geopolitical order. Many countries had to reorganise their diplomacy to adapt to the new situation in the world. As a result, countries were rebuilding a network of diverse relationships to implement foreign



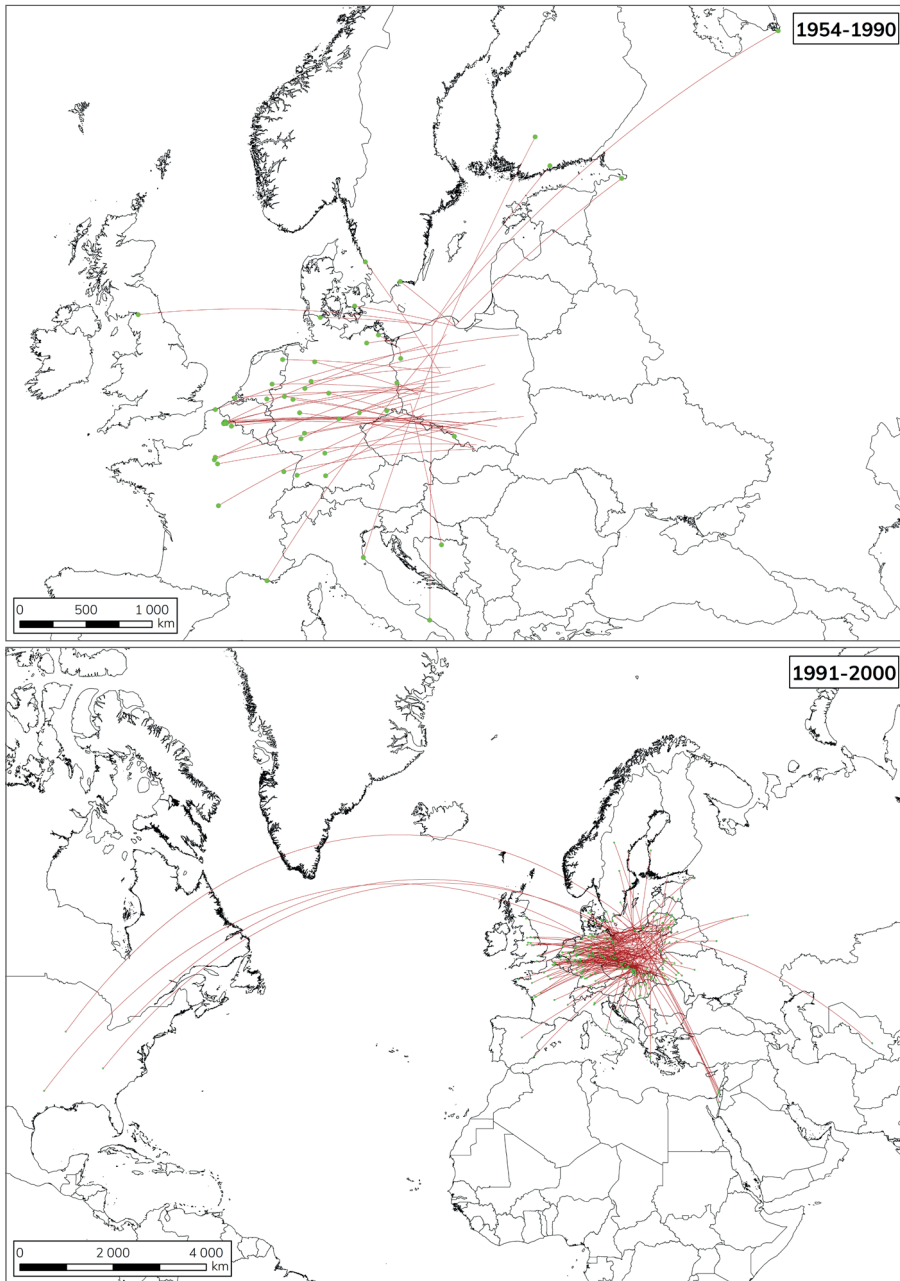
Source: Own elaboration. Own design

Figure 3: Twinning ratio in 2015 (number of partnerships established per 10,000 inhabitants)



Source: Own elaboration. Own design

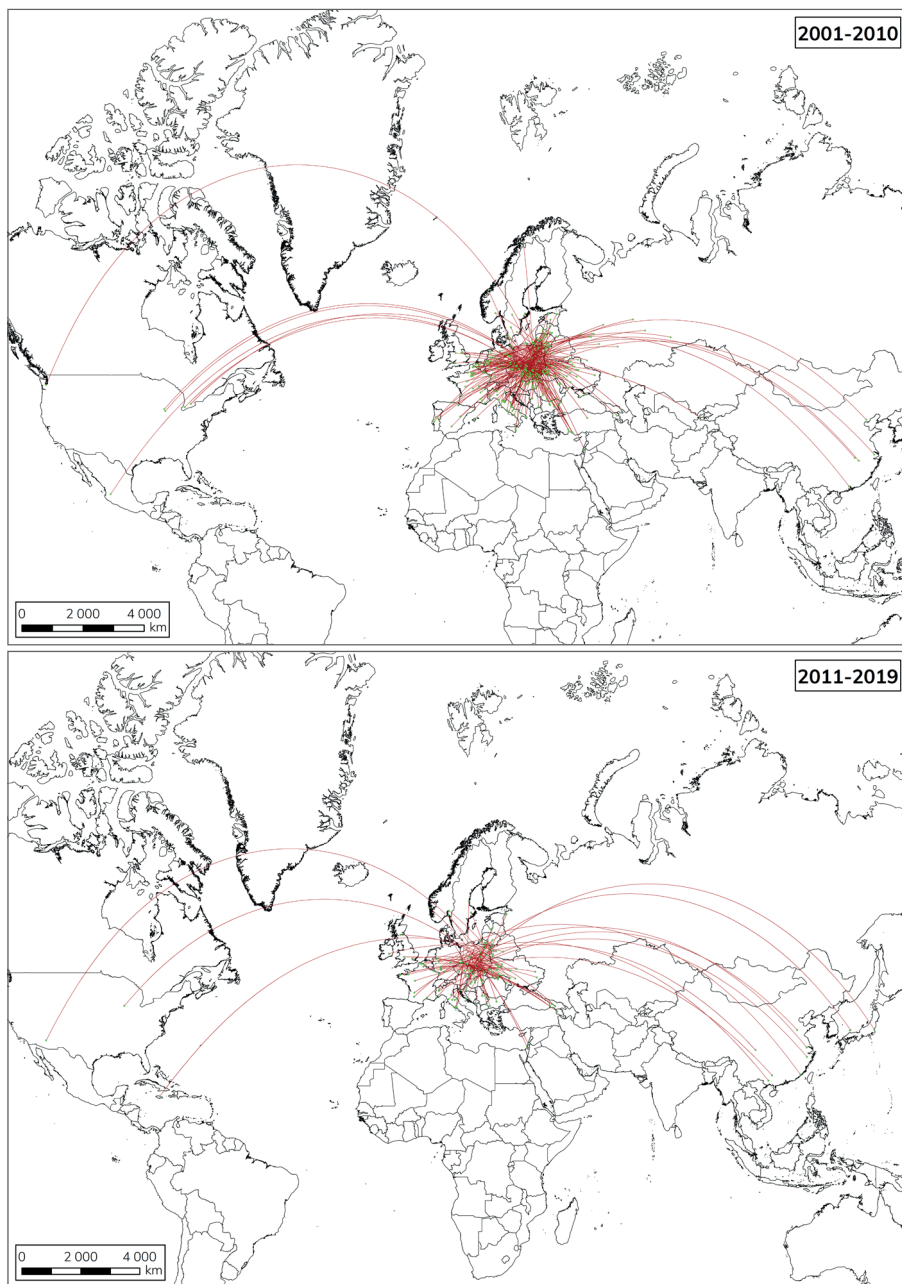
Figure 4: Distribution of partnerships established according to the distance between towns



Source: Own elaboration. Own design

Figure 5: Partnerships concluded by the analysed Polish towns in the years 1954–1990

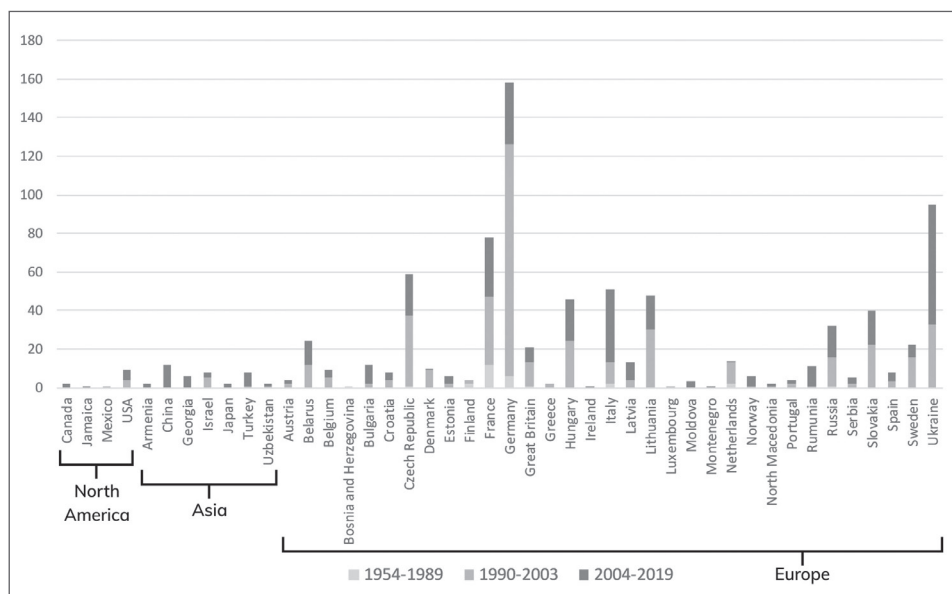
Figure 6: Partnerships concluded by the analysed Polish towns in the years 1991–2000



Source: Own elaboration. Own design

Figure 7: Partnerships concluded by the analysed Polish towns in the years 2001–2010

Figure 8: Partnerships concluded by the analysed Polish towns in the years 2011–2019



Source: Own elaboration. Own design

Figure 9: Partnerships concluded by the analysed Polish towns in the 1954–1989, 1990–2003 and 2004–2019 periods

policy objectives (DIETRICHSEN and VAN NIEKERK 2021). The fall of the Iron Curtain has increased the momentum for partnerships. Since 1990 and until 2003, 432 partnerships were concluded, a 1,270 percent rise compared to the 1954–1989 period. The spatial scope of the partnerships also increased significantly, covering many European countries as well as the United States and the countries of Western and Central Asia.

It should be noted that Polish towns were isolated until that point (1990). Then an intensive process of rapprochement with European countries began. Out of 432 new partnerships, as many as 231 were established with towns from EU countries. In the period of 1990–2003, 154 out of the 181 analysed cities (85 %) entered into at least one new partnership agreement. On average, there were three partnerships per town. This high dynamics of forming new partnerships, which characterised the period directly after the collapse of the socialist system in Poland, resulted in cooperation with a significant number of towns located to the east of the Polish border (188) and much more to the west (232). Interestingly, this intensive period of establishing cooperation with European cities preceded the moment when Poland joined the EU structures. Thus, on the one hand, pre-accession activities supported the conclusion of new agreements. On the other hand, rapprochement with European countries fostered a pro-European attitude among the Polish population.

The next period (2004–2019) was slightly less active in establishing cooperation. Eighty-two percent of the analysed cities started at least one new partnership agreement, and on average, each of them established three partnerships. Most partnerships began

in 2005 (following the year of Poland's accession to the European Union) and it was on average one agreement per town. At the same time, the number of partnerships in the east began to significantly outnumber new partnerships on the western side of the border. While 215 new partnerships were concluded with towns in Eastern Europe (an increase of 14 % compared to the previous period), the number of new partnerships in Western Europe amounted to 136 (a decrease of just over 41 % compared to the previous period).

The significantly greater average distance between the twin towns in comparison with previous periods should also be emphasised. For comparison, while until 1989 the average distance to a partner town in the set of the surveyed towns was 869 km, in the years 1990–2003 it was 746 km, whereas in the period 2004–2019 already 1137 km.

The latest data highlights the growing importance of Chinese cities. In 2005 the first partner city from China appeared. By the end of 2010 there were five more partnerships, and by the end of 2019 a total of 12 partnerships. Following tightening contacts in the European arena, Polish towns became increasingly bold in joining globalisation processes by actively seeking partners on other continents. We have therefore seen a saturation of Europeanisation. What is more, nowadays, it is not necessary to create formal networks to cooperate. The very fact of belonging to EU structures makes joint projects possible. It can, therefore, be assumed that the process of twinning with towns within the EU has been replaced by projectification (ŚRODA-MURAWSKA et al. 2019).

A lower intensity of new agreements with European countries accompanied the intensive increase in the number of partnerships with Chinese cities. While the dynamics of new partnership agreements have not been as high in the last period, the difference in the direction of establishing cooperation has significantly widened. In the latter period, one should note the dominance of partnerships with countries located in Asia (33) compared to seven partnerships concluded in the 1990–2003 period.

5.2 Dynamics of Cooperation over Time

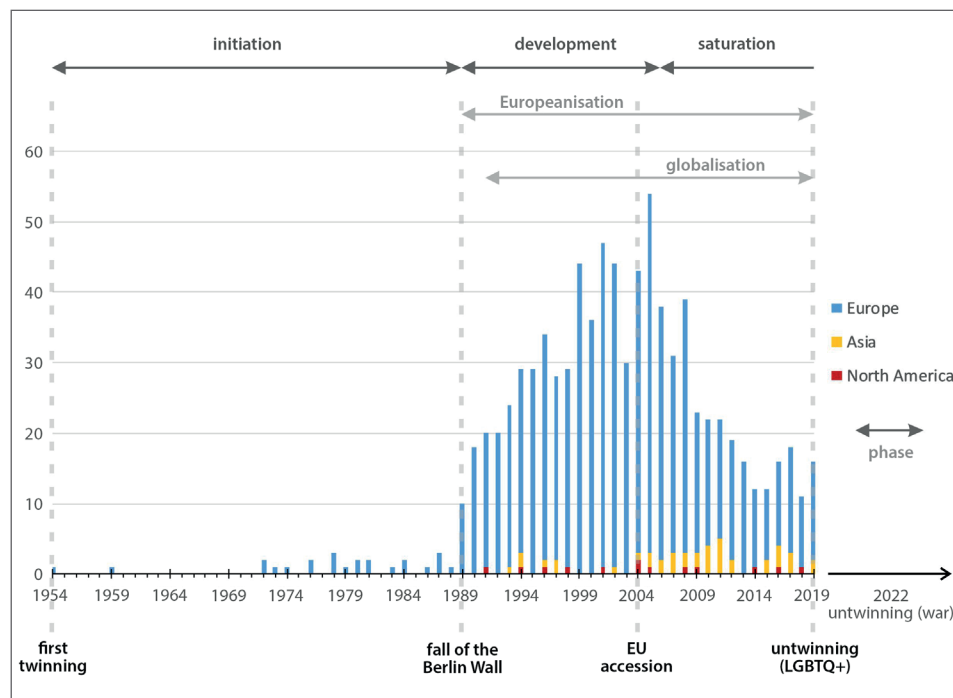
Based on the collected data, we distinguished three main phases of town twinning evolution in Poland: initiation, development, and saturation (cf. Figure 10).

The first distinguished phase is the period of domination of state centralism and Eastern bloc ideology. The creation of partnerships was limited to cities from geographically close socialist countries, confirming the theory of the 'neighbourhood effect' (ZELINSKY 1991). These partnerships were mainly propagandistic, limiting their actual impact on local communities.

In contrast, the next phase, after 1989, saw a sharp increase in the number of partnerships, mainly with Western European cities. The process of Europeanisation, supported by pre-accession funds and EU programmes, contributed to the development of democratic institutions and the transfer of technology and knowledge. Cooperation took on a practical dimension, clearly reflected in the role of cities as beneficiaries of European support.

The last phase was highlighted when, after Poland acceded to the EU, the number of new partnerships declined, and cooperation expanded to the global level to include cities

from Asia and other continents. The phenomenon of ‘projectification’ (ŚRODA-MURAWSKA et al. 2019) indicates a shift in priorities from formal partnerships to implementing specific projects.



Source: Own elaboration. Own design.

Figure 10: Dynamics of partnerships of Polish cities (1954–2022) by regions and development stages

In the last phase, we identified a new phenomenon, namely a process of untwining. *Untwining* means stopping cooperation between existing twin towns for a fixed or indefinite time. In the case of Polish towns, we found two reasons for the cessation of cooperation. The first of these is the failure to respect human rights resulting in the creation of ultra-right-wing local laws (resolutions of local governments in Poland against LGBTQ+ communities). This has caused the significant social exclusion of non-heteronormative people and the creation of LGBTQ-free zones, which have been sites of aggression caused by city policies (<https://wiadomosci...>; <https://oko.press/wysylamy...>; <https://tarnow...>; <https://www.se.pl...>; <https://queer.pl...>). In Poland, seven cities have been identified whose partners, despite their hitherto impeccable cooperation, have decided to discontinue their partnership. The OKO.press portal has also published a petition on this subject, appealing to all twinned towns to: “suspend or terminate cooperation while leaving the possibility of cooperation between citizens without the involvement of the authorities”.

The second type of untwining is connected to the latest wave of agreement breaking. This time, the roots of the phenomenon are related to the geopolitical situation in the region (Russian aggression against Ukraine) (<https://samorzad.pap.pl...>; <https://regiony.rp.pl...>; <https://uml.lodz.pl...>), as a result of which European cities terminate cooperation agreements with their current partners from the territory of Russia or Belarus. In Poland alone, 18 such acts of untwining were identified. On the one hand, these were the initiatives of local governments. On the other, they were encouraged by, for example, the recommendations on cooperation with partner towns published by the Association of Polish Cities. In its communication of 26 February 2022, we read that in connection with the escalation of hostilities in Ukraine, it is proposed to address condemnations to the Russian embassy in Poland and to terminate or suspend agreements signed with Russian towns. Similarly, the European Commission has indicated that “following the Russian invasion against Ukraine and in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, the Commission has decided to suspend the cooperation with Russian entities in research, science and innovation” (<https://ec.europa.eu...>) which could also encourage the cessation of agreements.

5.3 Case Studies: Differentiating International City Cooperation

Concerning the areas of town twinning cooperation, characteristics were identified, regarding Polish towns. Shortly after 1989, towns benefited from assistance in creating democratic foundations for the functioning of local communities and, above all, in terms of material aid. With time, this cooperation developed into more or less cyclical exchanges of representatives of the local government, students, or local groups active in the fields of culture, sport, and education. Also important were the stages of initiating modern solutions for the city’s functioning, a classic example “in which urban policies and knowledge are constituted and transferred from city to city via a focus on practices of ‘city twinning’” (JAYNE et al. 2017).

The interviews showed that Polish towns transformed within town twinning at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, particularly after accession to the European Union in 2004 (last period). Towns benefiting aid so far have started to actively disseminate democratic ideas or material support to twin towns in areas of armed conflict or other disasters (see supplementary materials). Thus, the cooperation priorities change corresponds to the town twinning periods. However, despite this change, the analysed Polish towns mainly represented three levels of cooperation: social, political and cultural. The economic dimension was significantly underrepresented, with either very limited or negligible activities (e.g., willingness to act or business exchanges).

Generally, interviews with companies indicated that their representatives in both towns had the opportunity to participate in trips to the “sister cities”. However, business cooperation with companies from the “sister cities” had yet to be established. If there were such an opportunity, both companies would be interested in cooperation: “We plan to remain open to business cooperation within sister cities.” The main obstacle is the need for more institutional support from the town for the potential establishment of cooperation with companies from “sister cities”.

During interviews with town representatives, the first stage was to establish schemes/procedures they had for establishing partnerships. All towns indicated that there were no criteria for the selection of “sister cities”. In Leszno, the cooperation with the city of Suhl during the German Democratic Republic era was imposed top-down. Factors contributing to establishing cooperation can be divided into several types:

- family connections, e.g. Chełmno – Kaniv (Ukraine);
- business relationships, e.g. Mielec – Löhne (Germany); Leszno – Montluçon (France);
- scientific links, e.g. Leszno – Dunaújváros (Hungary);
- cultural links, e.g. Chełmno – Letovice (Czech Republic);
- educational and sports links, e.g. Mielec – Morlaix (France).

The next stage of the interviews focused on identifying which institutions and to what extent were most closely involved in activities related to cooperation within the framework of the sister cities idea. All towns indicated a shift in cooperation from official visits to school and cultural exchanges:

“Nowadays, we have fewer official (local government) visits, and the cooperation is based on exchanges of inhabitants and young people, cooperation of NGOs (e.g. Polish-Dutch Association Leszno-Deurne on the Polish side and Association of the Circle of Friends of Deurne-Leszno on the Dutch side), cooperation of interest groups (e.g. philatelists’ circle), schools (cooperation of music schools with Montluçon) [...]. Cooperation also occurs in the culture and sports field” (representative of the Leszno Municipal Office).

Among the institutions actively cooperating within the network of “sister cities”, cultural, centres and schools were indicated as the most active ones. In turn, children, young people, cultural institutions (local governments and NGOs), and seniors primarily participated in exchange and cooperation. There were also employees of municipal offices, representatives of the fire service, police, and army who aimed to exchange experiences in city management.

In the case of Chełmno and Leszno, it was indicated that while cooperation in the socio-cultural field was highly developed, there was practically no cooperation in the business field. An exception is the town of Mielec, where the company owner, Mr. Henryk Bury, was indicated as the initiator of cooperation due to his investment in the “sister city”.

Although quantitative data show that the vast majority of Polish towns actively maintain cooperation within their partnerships, interviews in Leszno highlight significant challenges related to limited budgets. Town representatives emphasised that the lack of adequate funding often restricts the scope of cooperation, particularly in organising resident exchanges or cultural events. Despite these challenges, Leszno engages in low-budget initiatives, such as experience exchanges between schools or joint conferences, such as those held by Polish and international philatelist clubs. As noted by a representative of Leszno: “Over the years, cooperation has manifested itself in various fields: culture and art, sports, youth collaboration, and various interest groups – philatelists, police, fire services, seniors, hoteliers, chefs, craftsmen, artists, and many others.”

It was also emphasised that although towns saw the positive influence of residents' participation in events or international exchange on shaping their attitudes towards different cultures/nationalities, a lack of adequate funding prevented broader cooperation.

In the context of the evolution of cooperation, the example of Chełmno can be pointed out. At the beginning of the cooperation with Hann. Münden (Hannoverisch Münden), the town of Chełmno received concrete help (e.g. desks and computers for schools, ambulances, a car for the city guard, etc.). Later, the relations changed to joint assistance provided to other towns (e.g. humanitarian aid to Serbia). In turn, Leszno benefited from the experience of the Deurne local government in the field of city management:

"[...] in the 1990s, we drew inspiration and knowledge from the town of Deurne (the Netherlands) in the field of ecology (waste segregation, sewage treatment plants) and transport (planning bicycle paths)" (representative of the Leszno Municipal Office).

The results indicate that indeed town partnerships are an instrument of local policy and a platform for building social and cultural ties. Although business cooperation is not fully developed, the potential for this exists, indicating the need for institutional support. Examples such as the humanitarian aid of Chełmno or the ecological inspiration of Leszno show that town partnerships can evolve from material aid to cooperation based on knowledge exchange.

Quantitative data indicate a significant increase in the number of partnerships in the years immediately following Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004, which can be linked to access to European funds supporting international cooperation. In the case of Mielec, qualitative interviews revealed that EU funds were crucial for organising joint events, such as sports activities under the "Do We Sport" partnership project funded by EU resources, which further strengthened local ties with partner cities.

6 Discussion: Implications for CEE and Beyond

The obtained results organise and propose the operationalisation of concepts related to the development of CEE twinning. Our contribution to the existing knowledge was to identify the phases of twinning development, their dynamics and the dimension of cooperation of Polish towns after World War II in the context of the experience of CEE countries by treating the topic through quantitative and qualitative approaches. Moreover, knowledge concerning twinning development from a post-socialist country's perspective was systematised. The proposed division of the twinning phases of CEE towns organise the historical development in relation to Europeanisation and globalisation.

Opening up to Western economic and cultural flows, and thus to the processes of Europeanisation and globalisation, also allowed other Eastern Bloc countries to begin a new era of town twinning (MARKUSZEWSKA et al. 2016; BUSSMANN and NICKEL 2018; COUPERUS and VRHOCI 2019; BLOSSFELDT 2022). In a comparable situation with Poland, data on Belarus indicate the dynamic creation of new partnerships, where the democratic reforms

of the late 1980s and early 1990s increased the number of partnerships (MIATSEZH 2012). A similar situation occurred in Moldova, which, on the one hand, intensified ties with Romania and the EU and, on the other, greatly reduced cooperation with other former Soviet Union countries, including Russia (CANTIR 2023). Not only did the dynamics of the new partnerships established change, but also the geographical scope. Also, Odesa (Ukraine) was in an identical geopolitical situation as Polish towns and had no partners outside the eastern part of Europe until 1989 (see BOULINEAU 2015).

The results indicate that local administrative units primarily seek twin towns in neighbouring countries, regardless of size. This, despite the omnipresent Internet and vast options of online collaboration, confirms what ZELINSKY (1991) claimed about cities often succumbing to the “neighbourhood effect” and choosing as their twin towns those that are geographically accessible and culturally coherent (BRAKMAN et al. 2016). However, this factor is weakening over time. We observed an increase in the number of twinning with other continents and a significant increase in the average distance, which confirms the indications of KALTENBRUNNER et al. (2013) that, thanks to globalisation processes, nowadays, geographical distance does not matter in establishing cooperation between cities.

In opposition to the evolution of twinning, one identifies the incidental official breaking of agreements or what RYAN and MAZILLI (2021) call “silent untwining”: “The resources, officers and institutional knowledge required to maintain international relationships are repurposed and/or lost amid wider processes of restructuring and limitations.” A similar silent untwining, although with a different genesis, was observed in CEE countries after the break-up of the USSR (SAPRYKA and TRAWIN 2017). This can be explained by the lack of authentic and lasting ties between the inhabitants of former partners (HALAS and PORAWSKI 2003). Despite this, a few of them have survived to this day, reinforced by the experience of the political situation in Europe after 1989 (KALITTA 2008).

However, the reported last-phase contract breaking in relation to Poland can certainly not be called “silent”. Untwining, in this case, is the deliberate breaking of existing ties between two cities due to the unacceptability by one of them of the local law enacted by the partner or an extremely dangerous behaviour deviating from international norms. It is worth stressing that this phenomenon has global significance (cf. <https://www.nytimes.com....>).

In summary, concerning the towns analysed and the literature studies, we indicate that the genesis of the start of the untwining process can be:

- change of political systems when the existing system is reorientated. Existing ties naturally disappear in favour of newly established ones (silent untwining in CEE countries after the break-up of the USSR) (RYAN and MAZILLI 2021);
- armed conflicts, when it is impossible to maintain partnership relations with representatives of the aggressor state (untwining with Russian and Belarussian cities on the part of EU cities) (European Union 2022);
- cultural conflicts when any denial of the rights of any human being is unacceptable (disagreement with the significant social exclusion of non-heteronormative people and the creation of LGBT-free zones) (<https://sip.lex.pl...>; <https://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl...>; <https://oko.press/strefy...>; <https://rp.pl...>);

- socio-economic transformations, which can naturally lead to a reorientation of a city's socio-economic priorities (RYAN and MAZILLI 2021).

It should be assumed that there may be new causes that will expand the list of the causes mentioned above of untwining in the future.

The identified phenomenon is highly alarming when untwining is juxtaposed with the idea of twinning, understood as involving “individuals and organized groups at all levels of society in citizen diplomacy, with the hope that personal relationships, fostered through sister city, county and state affiliations, would lessen the chance of future world conflicts” (CREMER et al. 2001) or increasing “international understanding and foster world peace by furthering international communication and exchange at the person-to-person level through city-to-city affiliations” (Sister Cities Convention 2001), so as a tool to prevent the world from repeating the experience of the Second World War.

Taking into account the dimensions of cooperation, the results show that the cooperation of individual towns with their twin towns concerns mainly the social sphere (e.g. humanitarian aid) and cultural sphere (e.g. exchange of inhabitants, joint cultural events). The top-down model of Europeanisation, in which EU institutions and local governments play a dominant role, has fostered the development of socio-cultural exchange while marginalising economic cooperation, which would require greater involvement from private enterprises. In the bottom-up model of Europeanisation, driven by local initiatives, the lack of a coherent strategy to support entrepreneurship within sister city partnerships has hindered the development of economic collaboration. The example of Mielec demonstrates that successes in this area are primarily the result of individual efforts rather than a systemic approach.

Despite extensive support for cultural and infrastructural projects under EU funding schemes, the lack of financial frameworks dedicated to fostering economic cooperation has limited the potential to develop this dimension of city partnerships. Experiences from countries such as Germany, France, Great Britain and the Netherlands highlight that the involvement of the private sector and economic institutions can significantly strengthen sister city partnerships, which, in the case of Poland, remains underdeveloped (FURMANKIEWICZ 2005; ARCHAMBAULT 2009; HAMMERSCHMID and YSA 2010; CRUZ and MARQUES 2011; BARLOW et al. 2013; JAYNE et al. 2013; MEIJERS et al. 2014; KUROWSKA-PYSZ et al. 2018).

This is similar to the experience of Australian, New Zealand or Portuguese cities. As O'TOOLE (2000, p. 48) points out, for Australian cities “the commercial aspect of the SC-TRs was not as significant as the associative and reciprocative”. For New Zealand cities, CREMER et al. (2001, p. 385) shows that “major findings from the research showed that while all cities responding to a survey attached a high importance to culture, international understandings and educational objectives, they were sharply divided over the importance of economic objectives, with almost one in three placing a low priority on economic objectives”. In the case of Australia, as in Poland, an increase in the importance of contacts for the economic development of towns has been observed, especially in partnerships established in recent years. Nevertheless, the economic sphere was the least stimulated within the studied towns.

Most importantly, addressing the paper's main aim, i.e., to find out how the dimensions of intercity cooperation support the processes of Europeanisation and globalisation of a CEE country over the years in the face of important geopolitical developments, we showed that spheres of cooperation could enhance Europeanisation and globalisation. Polish towns joined the process of Europeanisation after 1989 using twinning. Western partners supported the process of Europeanisation of Poland through cooperation with Polish towns in the social, cultural and political fields. Regarding the towns analysed, foreign partners' technical, infrastructural or financial support directly to poorer towns can be considered an example of cooperation activities.

However, as the years passed, including the progressive Europeanisation and globalisation of Polish towns, it was they who became the carriers of these processes for their eastern neighbours. This can be considered an example of the globalisation of care (CLARKE 2008; 2011), which not only needs to occur in a Global North-Global South direction (BONTENBAL 2009; 2010). The globalisation of care plays a key role in redefining contemporary inter-city cooperation, demonstrating how values such as care and solidarity permeate transnational relations between urban communities. Contemporary city partnerships go beyond the traditional 'North to South' model of aid, offering new forms of exchange that are based on reciprocity, balance, and shared responsibility. In this way, the globalisation of care is becoming a universal phenomenon, encompassing diverse lines of cooperation, both between developed and developing countries, as well as between cities with similar levels of development (DEACON 2000; BENATAR et al. 2003; SAKER et al. 2004; FRIEDMANN 2005; ROBINSON 2011; LABONTÉ et al. 2011; THORNLEY and NEWMAN 2011; ERIKSEN 2020).

Cross-city partnerships serve technical, financial, or cultural exchanges and strengthen local democratic structures and civic communities. Cities become platforms for realising values such as inclusiveness, equality, and local engagement and building common spaces for sustainable development activities. The dynamic nature of cross-city cooperation allows for a seamless transition of roles – cities that initially benefited from support become providers themselves over time, creating multi-level cooperation networks. This cyclical approach illustrates that the processes of globalisation and Europeanisation are not one-sided but assume reciprocity and mutual benefit (HUDSON and HADJIMICHALIS 2006; CORNELIUS and WALLACE 2010; POLK 2011; RAVAZZOLI and VALERO 2020; STOTT and MURPHY 2020; WEAVER et al. 2021; GUILHERME 2021; HUNTJENS and KEMP 2022; GUPTA and ASLAM 2022; ALFARO D'ALENÇON et al. 2023).

The globalisation of care also highlights the importance of caring as a core value in international relationships. Inter-city partnerships have become a tool to promote solidarity in the face of global challenges such as climate change, migration, and social inequalities. These collaborations reflect an integrated approach in which cities act as local and global actors committed to building a more just and sustainable world. In this way, globalisation of care becomes not only an element of inter-city cooperation but also a model that promotes accountability, mutual support and long-term commitment to the common good (BENATAR et al. 2003; HANKIVSKY 2006; BIELER and LINDBERG 2010; AMEN et al. 2011; ECKENWILER 2012; HAMPTON 2015; STOUT and LOVE 2018; WILLIAMS 2018; FAIST 2018; CHATZIDAKIS et al. 2020).

It also appears that the relationship between the planes of cooperation and the processes of Europeanisation and globalisation is not one-sided. These processes can also support the spheres of cooperation (e.g. the European Union's actions to support town twinning in Europe). However, establishing the complex relationship between all factors and processes requires more in-depth analysis and research. Noteworthy, also in the initial phase in other CEE countries, there were attempts at a globalisation process through town twinning; however, due to communist ideologies, they were unsuccessful (cf. RAU und RIECKMANN 2023). Thus, the changes in priorities in the cooperation of CEE cities resulted from the need to adapt to new political conditions (cf. LANGENOHL 2015). They reflect a shift from reconciliation efforts towards more pragmatic cooperation focused on projects and knowledge exchange.

In the first phase highlighted (the "initial phase"), which was strictly controlled by the state apparatus, priorities were mainly limited to the propaganda nature of cooperation. Ties were limited to the Eastern Bloc countries as a result of the geopolitical isolation and ideological dominance of the USSR. In the "development phase", after the fall of the Iron Curtain and the systemic transformation, there was a sharp change in cooperation priorities. The towns analysed began to take advantage of opportunities for financial and technological support from EC partners. The focus shifted to Europeanisation through the development of democratic institutions and cultural and social exchange. Today (the "saturation phase" after 2004), however, the aims of cooperation have changed. More global orientations prevail (cf. Figures 3–5), linked to globalisation processes. At the same time, a trend towards projection (ŚRODA-MURAWSKA et al. 2019) has emerged, meaning that the priority has become the realisation of concrete projects rather than the establishment of new formal partnerships.

Referring to DELANTY and RUMFORD (2005) and LANGENOHL (2015), it has to be said that, with a delay of several decades, also CEE cities started to actively engage in globalisation processes by establishing partnerships first at the European and then at the global level. Town twinning in CEE is an extremely dynamic phenomenon, as indicated by the identified phases of twinning in Poland: development and saturation. The dynamics and scope of town twinning must now be considered based on a narrow western conception and including CEE countries.

7 Conclusion

The use of mixed-methods approaches has shown that while numbers may indicate the intensity of cooperation, the interviews allow us to understand its actual impact on residents and local institutions, which confirms the results obtained by GROSSPIETSCH (2009), who indicates that socio-cultural exchanges within city partnerships play a key role in building intercultural ties and promoting European integration.

The results suggest that the lack of criteria for selecting city partnerships and limited institutional support may hinder developing cooperation in new areas such as business. This aligns with BUIS (2009), who points out that the lack of formal governance structures in city partnerships may limit their ability to develop cooperation in more challenging areas such as the economy. At the same time, the development of socio-cultural exchanges, especially among young people and seniors, points to the positive impact of partner-

ships on local societies. The results also highlight the remarkably diverse experiences and trajectories of town twinning across different cities and periods.

In the end, it should be noted that, even though the development of town twinning of Polish towns is based on the experience of CEE countries, we are aware that not all countries in that area have had and/or are having identical partnerships. The directions for establishing partnerships and the years in which they were initiated may differ slightly (e.g. due to different years of accession to the EU or lack of accession), but research shows that currently most cities establish cooperation of that type. As other studies have shown, despite the nuances between the individual CEE countries, the common history, particularly related to the collapse of the USSR, certainly forms a specific core of experience that causes similar processes to occur over time. To investigate the detailed differences between the CEE countries in relation to town twinning, research should be conducted on each of them.

The analyses indicate that town twinning in Poland not only reflects the Europeanisation and globalisation processes but also actively supports them. On the one hand, Europeanisation provided the institutional and financial framework, enabling a rapid opening to the West after 1989. On the other hand, globalisation has allowed for a further expansion of these activities, including cooperation with non-European cities. These processes are interrelated – Europeanisation created the conditions for globalisation, and globalisation enabled Polish towns to participate more fully in global networks. In the future, it is worth exploring how new international and local priorities, such as sustainable development, will influence the evolution of twinning.

Furthermore, the research indicates that intercity cooperation in Poland has undergone a dynamic evolution from propaganda-like activities to pragmatic implementation of international projects. This process reflects geopolitical transformations and shows how towns can actively influence globalisation and Europeanisation. The presented phases of twinning in Poland are an important contribution to understanding this phenomenon in CEE countries.

8 References

- AKMAN Ç. (2016): Evaluating the Current Situation via Town Twinning Practices in Turkey. In: *Journal of Süleyman Demirel University Institute of Social Sciences*, CIEP Special Edition, pp. 1055–1071.
- ALECU DE FLERS N., MÜLLER P. (2010): Applying the Concept of Europeanization to the Study of Foreign Policy: Dimensions and Mechanisms. Paper prepared for the GARNET Conference 2010 in Brussels: The European Union in International Affairs, Panel B.3.
- ALFARO D'ALENÇON P., BOANADA-FUCHS A., GREENE M., KRISHNAMURTY S., MICHELUTTI E., MORETTO L., SMIT W. (eds.) (2023): *Engaging Urban Research in Policy Making: Towards Equitable Economic Growth*. Berlin: Universitätsverlag der TU Berlin. – <https://library.open.org/handle/20.500.12657/62253>.
- AMEN M., TOLY N. J., MCCARNEY P. L., SEGBERS K. (eds.) (2011): *Cities and Global Governance: New Sites for International Relations*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
- ANTONYUK N. (2018): Central, Eastern and East-Central Europe: On the History and the Current State of Conceptualization and Demarcation Concepts. In: *Politeja*, 15, 6 (57), pp. 7–27. – <https://doi.org/10.12797/Politeja.15.2018.57.01>.

- ARCHAMBAULT E. (2009): The Third Sector in Europe: Does It Exhibit a Converging Movement? In: *Civil Society in Comparative Perspective*, 26, pp. 3–24. – [https://doi.org/10.1108/S0195-6310\(2009\)0000026005](https://doi.org/10.1108/S0195-6310(2009)0000026005).
- BANDOV G., KOLMAN N. H. (2018): Research on Europeanization in Literature: From the Top-down Approach to Europeanization as a Multi-directional Process. In: *Cadmus*, 3 (5), pp. 134–144 – <http://cadmusjournal.org/node/699>.
- BARLOW J., ROEHRICH J., WRIGHT, S. (2013): Europe Sees Mixed Results from Public-Private Partnerships for Building and Managing Health Care Facilities and Services. In: *Health Affairs*, 32 (1), pp. 146–154 – <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/10.1377/hlthaff.2011.1223>.
- BATTEN D. F. (1995): Network Cities: Creative Urban Agglomerations for the 21st Century. In: *Urban Studies*, 32 (2), pp. 313–327. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420989550013103>.
- BAYCAN-LEVENT T., KUNDAK S., GULUMSER A. A. (2008): City-to-city Linkages in a Mobile Society: The Role of Urban Networks in Eurocities and Sister Cities. In: *International Journal of Services Technology and Management*, 10 (1), pp. 83–109. – <https://www.inderscience.com/offers.php?id=20349>.
- BEAUREGARD R. A. (1995): Theorizing the Global-Local Connection. In: Knox P. L., TAYLOR P. J. (eds.): *World Cities in a World-System*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, pp. 232–248.
- BEAUVOIS D., KLOCZOWSKI J., SAMSONOWICZ H., DUCREUX M.-E., WANDYCZ P. S. (2000): *Historia Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, tom 1 [History of East Central Europe, Volume 1]. Lublin: Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej.
- BENATAR S. R., DAAR A. S., SINGER P. A. (2003): Global Health Ethics: The Rationale for Mutual Caring. In: *International Affairs*, 79 (1), pp. 107–138. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00298>.
- BIELER A., LINDBERG I. (eds.) (2010): *Global Restructuring, Labour, and the Challenges for Transnational Solidarity*. London: Routledge. – <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203842454>.
- BINEK J., OPRAVIL Z., CHMELAŘ R., SVOBODOVA H. (2016): Cooperation and Mutual Relationships of Cities and their Hinterlands with Regard to the Operation of EU Integrated Development Instruments. In: *Quaestiones Geographicae*, 35 (2), pp. 59–69. – <https://doi.org/10.1515/quageo-2016-0015>.
- BLOSSFELDT S. (2022): Promoting Cross-Border Cooperation through Cross-Border Central Places: Strategic Town-Twinning on the Bavarian-Czech Border Reconsidered. In: *European Planning Studies*, 31 (8), pp. 1594–1611. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2022.2083913>.
- BOERZEL T. (2003): *Shaping and Taking EU Policies: Member State Responses to Europeanization*. Belfast: Queens University (Queen's Papers on Europeanisation).
- BONTENBAL M. C. (2009): Strengthening Urban Governance in the South through City-to-City Cooperation: Towards an Analytical Framework. In: *Habitat International*, 33 (2), pp. 181–189. – <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2008.10.016>.
- BONTENBAL M. C. (2010): City Networking with the 'Global South': Dutch Policy and Practice. In: *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie (TESG)*, 101 (4), pp. 462–472. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.2010.00615.x>.
- BONTENBAL M. C., VAN LINDERT P. (2009): Transnational City-to-City Cooperation: Issues Arising from Theory and Practice. In: *Habitat International*, 33 (2), pp. 131–133. – <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2008.10.009>.
- BOULINEAU E. (2015): International Relations of Twin Cities of the Black Sea Region: Spatial and Temporal Dynamics. In: *Ukrainian Geographic Journal*, 2015 (2), pp. 33–40. – https://ukrgeojournal.org.ua/sites/default/files/UGJ_2015_2_33-40.pdf.
- BRAKMAN S., GARRETSEN H., OUMER A. (2016): Town Twinning and German City Growth. In: *Regional Studies*, 50 (8), pp. 1420–1432. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2015.1023282>.
- BRENNER N. (2004): *New State Spaces: Urban Governance and the Rescaling of Statehood*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. – <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199270057.001.0001>.

- BRENNER N., SCHMID C. (2017): Elements for a New Epistemology of the Urban. In: HALL S., BURDETT R. (eds.): *The Sage Handbook of the 21st Century City*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, Part 1, Chapter 4, pp. 47–67. – <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781526402059.n4>.
- BUCKLEY P. H., TAKAHASHI A., ANDERSON A. (2015): The Role of Sister Cities' Staff Exchanges in Developing "Learning Cities": Exploring Necessary and Sufficient Conditions in Social Capital Development Utilizing Proportional Odds Modeling. In: *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 12 (7), pp. 7133–7153. – <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph120707133>.
- BUIS H. (2009): The Role of Local Government Associations in Increasing the Effectiveness of City-to-City Cooperation. In: *Habitat International*, 33 (2), pp. 190–194. – <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2008.10.017>.
- BURKSIENE V., DVORAK J., BURBULTË-TSISKARISHVILI G. (2020): City Diplomacy in Young Democracies: The Case of the Baltics. In: AMIRI S., SEVIN E. (eds.): *City Diplomacy. Current Trends and Future Prospects*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 305–330.
- BUSSMANN M., NICKEL S. (2018): Transnational Cooperation: A Network Analysis of Town Twinning in the Baltic Sea Region. In: *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 49 (3), pp. 281–303. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/01629778.2018.1447977>.
- CANTIR C. (2023): "Goodbye Moscow, Hello Brussels": The City Diplomacy of Chişinău Mayor Dorin Chirtoacă. In: *Nationalities Papers*, 51 (1), pp. 157–176. – <https://doi.org/10.1017/nps.2021.57>.
- CARDOSO R. V., MEIJERS E. J. (2016): Contrasts Between First-tier and Second-tier Cities in Europe: A Functional Perspective. In: *European Planning Studies*, 24 (5), pp. 996–1015. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2015.1120708>.
- CASTELLS M. (1993): European Cities, the Informational Society, and the Global Economy. In: *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie (TESG)*, 84 (4), pp. 247–257. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.1993.tb01767.x>.
- CASTELLS M. (2003): Local and Global: Cities in the Network Society. In: *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie (TESG)*, 93 (5), pp. 548–558. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9663.00225>.
- CHATZIDAKIS A., HAKIM J., LITTLER J., ROTTENBERG C., SEGAL L. (2020): *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence*. London: Verso Books.
- CHUNG M., MASCITELLI B. (2008): The Role of Sister City Relationships in the Enhancement of Trade: Latrobe City (Australia) and Taizhou (China). In: *GBATA 2008: Global Business and Technology Association Tenth International Conference*. Conference Paper. New York: Global Business and Technology Association, pp. 232–238. – <http://hdl.handle.net/10536/DRO/DU:30018334>.
- CLARKE N. (2008): From Ethical Consumerism to Political Consumption. In: *Geography Compass*, 2 (6), pp. 1870–1884. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2008.00170.x>.
- CLARKE N. (2009): In What Sense 'Spaces of Neoliberalism'? The New Localism, the New Politics of Scale, and Town Twinning. In: *Political Geography*, 28 (8), pp. 496–507. – <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2009.12.001>.
- CLARKE N. (2011): Globalising Care? Town Twinning in Britain Since 1945. In: *Geoforum*, 42 (1), pp. 115–125. – <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2010.10.006>.
- CORNELIUS N., WALLACE J. (2010): Cross-sector Partnerships: City Regeneration and Social Justice. In: *Journal of Business Ethics*, 94, pp. 71–84. – <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-011-0780-6>.
- Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) (2010): Table Showing the Number of Twinings in the Wider Europe in 2010. Brussels: CEMR – <http://www.twinning.org/uploads/assets/news/Number%20of%20twinings%20in%20Europe%20in%202010.pdf> (last access: 01.09.2021).
- COUPERUS S., VRHOČI D. (2019): A Profitable Friendship, Still? Town Twinning between Eastern and Western European Cities Before and After 1989. In: BRAAT E., CORDUWENER P. (eds.):

- 1989 and the West. Western Europe since the End of the Cold War. London: Routledge, pp. 143–156. – <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/oa-edit/10.4324/9781315146355/1989-west-elenei-braat-pepijn-corduwener>.
- CREMER R. D., DE BRUIN A., DUPUIS A. (2001): International Sister-Cities: Bridging the Global-Local Divide. In: *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 60 (1), pp. 377–401.
- CROSS B. (2010): Sister Cities and Economic Development: A New Zealand Perspective. In: *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, 6 (30), pp. 104–117.
- CRUZ C. O., MARQUES R. C. (2011): Contribution to the Study of PPP Arrangements in Airport Development, Management, and Operation. In: *Transport Policy*, 18 (1), pp. 13–21. – <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tranpol.2010.07.005>.
- DĄBROWSKI L. S. (2020): Idea miast partnerskich a jej znaczenie dla rozwoju współczesnych miast - perspektywa geograficzna. Przykład Leszna [The Concept of Twin Cities and its Importance for the Development of Contemporary Cities – A Geographical Perspective. The Example of Lesno]. In: FIEDOŃ Ł., ANIELSKA K., ŚWIGOST-KAPOCSI A. (eds.): *Współczesne problemy i kierunki badawcze w geografii T. 8* [Contemporary Problems and Research Directions in Geography, Volume 8]. Krakow: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, pp. 11–30.
- DE VILLIERS J. C., DE CONING T. J., SMIT E. V. D. M. (2007): Towards an Understanding of the Success Factors in International Twinning and Sister-City Relationships. In: *South African Journal of Business Management*, 38 (1), article No. 573. – <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajbm.v38i1.573>.
- DEACON B. (2000): *Globalisation and Social Policy: The Threat to Equitable Welfare*. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) (= Geneva 2000 Occasional Paper, 5). – <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/148809/1/862980178.pdf>.
- DELANTY G., RUMFORD C. (2005): *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europeanization*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- DELLA PORTA D., CAIANI M. (2006): The Europeanization of Public Discourse in Italy: A Top-Down Process? In: *European Union Politics*, 7 (1), pp. 77–112. – <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116506060913>
- DERUDDER B., TAYLOR P. J., WITLOX F., CATALANO G. (2003): Hierarchical Tendencies and Regional Patterns in the World City Network: A Global Urban Analysis of 234 Cities. In: *Regional Studies*, 37 (9), pp. 875–886. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/0034340032000143887>.
- DIETRICHSEN P., VAN NIEKIERK G. (2021): City Diplomacy in a Changing World of International Relations. In: *City Diplomacy Papers*, 1, pp. 4–13. – https://www.sacities.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/City-Diplomacy-Papers_Volume-1_.pdf.
- DIMITROVA A. (2002): Enlargement, Institution-Building and the EU's Administrative Capacity Requirement. In: *West European Politics*, 25 (4), pp. 171–190. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/713601647>.
- ECKENWILER L. (2012): *Long-term Care, Globalization, and Justice*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press. – <https://doi.org/10.1353/book.13864>.
- ERIKSEN T. H. (2020): *Globalization: The Key Concepts*. 2nd Edition. London: Routledge. – <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003085492>.
- European Union (2022): *Challenges and Opportunities of LRAs' Involvement in the Reconstruction of Ukraine*. Luxemburg: Publications Office of the EU. – <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f163f3a8-395b-11ed-9c68-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> [last access: 10.10.2022].
- FAIST T. (2018): *The Transnationalized Social Question: Migration and the Politics of Social Inequalities in the Twenty-First Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. – <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199249015.001.0001>.

- FALKENHAIN M., HOELSCHER M., RUSER A. (2012): Twinning Peaks – Potential and Limits of an Evolving Network in Shaping Europe as a Social Space. In: *Journal of Civil Society*, 8 (3), pp. 229–250. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/17448689.2012.738881>.
- FARIAS I., BENDER T. (eds.) (2012): *Urban Assemblages: How Actor-Network Theory Changes Urban Studies*. London: Routledge. – <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203870631>.
- FRIEDMANN J. (2005): Globalization and the Emerging Culture of Planning. In: *Progress in Planning*, 64 (3), pp. 183–234. – <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.progress.2005.05.001>.
- FULCHER K. (2021): “A Tale of Twinned Cities”: A Comparative Analysis to Predict Potential Twinning on the US-Mexico Border. Knoxville: University of Tennessee (Chancellor’s Honors Program Projects). – https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/2409.
- FURMANKIEWICZ M. (2004): Międzynarodowe związki partnerskie gmin Dolnego Śląska [International Partnerships of Municipalities in Lower Silesia]. In: *Studia nad Rozwojem Dolnego Śląska* [Development Studies of Lower Silesia], 24 (3), pp. 30–43.
- FURMANKIEWICZ M. (2005): Town-Twinning as a Factor Generating International Flows of Goods and People – The Example of Poland. In: *Belgeo. Revue Belge de Géographie*, 2005 (1-2), pp. 145–162. – <https://doi.org/10.4000/belgeo.12466>.
- GABARTA E. (2021): Twinning as a Tool of International Communication Between Russia and the UK: Past, Present and the Future. Amsterdam: Elsevier SSRN. – https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3991994.
- GIULIANI M. (2000): Europeanization and Italy: A Bottom-up Process? In: *South European Society and Politics*, 5 (2), pp. 47–72.
- GRAHAM S., BROOKS J., HEERY D. (1996): Towns on the Television: Closed Circuit TV in British Towns and Cities. In: *Local Government Studies*, 22 (3), pp. 1–27. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003939608433827>.
- GROSSPIETSCH J. (2009): More Than Food and Folk Music? Geographical Perspectives on European Town Twinning. In: *Geography Compass*, 3 (3), pp. 1281–1304. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2009.00238.x>.
- GUILHERME M. (2021): Intercultural Responsibility: Critical Inter-epistemic Dialog and Equity for Sustainable Development. In: LEAL FILHO W., MARISA AZUL A., BRANDLI L., LANGE SALVIA A., WALL T. (eds.): *Partnerships for the Goals. Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*. Cham: Springer Nature, pp. 599–610. – https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95963-4_75.
- GUPTA J., ASLAM S. (2022): *Decentralised Cooperation and Local Government: Addressing Contemporary Global Challenges*. Brighton: Institute of Development Studies.
- HAŁAS K., PORAWSKI A. (2003): *Miasta i Gminy Bliźniacze* [Twin Cities and Municipalities]. Warszawa [Warsaw]: Urząd Komitetu Integracji Europejskiej [Office of the Committee for European Integration].
- HAMDOUCH A., DEMAZIERE C., BANOVAC K. (2017): The Socio-economic Profiles of Small and Medium-sized Towns: Insights from European Case Studies. In: *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie (TESG)*, 108 (4), pp. 456–471. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12254>.
- HAMMERSCHMID G., YSA T. (2010): Empirical PPP Experiences in Europe: National Variations of a Global Concept. In: HODGE G. A., GREVE C., BOARDMAN A. E. (eds.): *International Handbook on Public–Private Partnerships*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 383–404. – <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781849804691.00035>.
- HAMPTON P. (2015): *Workers and Trade Unions for Climate Solidarity: Tackling Climate Change in a Neoliberal World*. London: Routledge. – <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315732220>.
- HANKIVSKY O. (2006): Imagining Ethical Globalization: The Contributions of a Care Ethic. In: *Journal of Global Ethics*, 2 (1), pp. 91–110. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449620600677338>.

- HIRSCHHAUSEN U. V., PATEL K. K. (2010): Europeanization in History: An Introduction. In: CONWAY M., PATEL K. K. (eds.): *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century: Historical Approaches*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–18.
- HU T., NATARAJAN S., DELIOS A. (2021): Sister Cities, Cross-national FDI, and the Subnational FDI Location Decision. In: *Journal of International Business Studies*, 52 (7), pp. 1279–1301. – <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41267-021-00409-2>.
- HUDSON R., HADJIMICHALIS C. (2006): Networks, Regional Development, and Democratic Control. In: *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 30 (4), pp. 858–872. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2006.00687.x>.
- HUNTJENS P., KEMP R. (2022): The Importance of a Natural Social Contract and Co-Evolutionary Governance for Sustainability Transitions. In: *Sustainability*, 14 (5), article No. 2976. – <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14052976>.
- JAŃCZAK J. (2017): Town Twinning in Europe. Understanding Manifestations and Strategies. In: *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 32 (4), pp. 477–495. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2016.1267589>.
- JAYNE M., HUBBARD P., BELL D. (2017): Twin Cities: Territorial and Relational Urbanism. In: Hannigan J., Richards G. (eds.): *The SAGE Handbook of New Urban Studies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing, pp. 63–77. – <https://sk.sagepub.com/hnbk/edvol/the-sage-handbook-of-new-urban-studies/chpt/5-twin-cities-territorial-relational-urbanism>.
- JOENNIEMI P., JAŃCZAK J. (2017): Theorizing Town Twinning – Towards a Global Perspective. In: *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, 32 (4), pp. 423–428. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2016.1267583>.
- KALITTA E. (2008): Rola miast partnerskich w budowaniu przyjaźni między narodami – Przykład Chojnic. [The Role of Twinned Towns in Building Friendship between Nations. The Example of Chojnic]. In: *Samorząd Terytorialny [Local Self-Government]*, 12, pp. 25–36.
- KALTENBRUNNER A., ARAGÓN P., LANIADO D., VOLKOVICH Y. (2013): Not All Paths Lead to Rome: Analysing the Network of Sister Cities. In: ELMENREICH W., DRESSLER F., LORETO V. (eds.): *Self-Organizing Systems. 7th IFIP TC6 International Workshop, Palma de Mallorca, Revised Selected Papers*. Berlin / Heidelberg, Springer, pp. 151–156.
- KIPFER S., SCHMID C., GOONEWARDENA K., MILGROM R. (2008): Globalizing Lefebvre? In: GOONEWARDENA K., KIPFER S., MILGRAM R., SCHMID C. (eds.): *Space, Difference, Everyday Life. Reading Henri Lefebvre*. New York: Routledge, Chapter 17.
- KŁOCZOWSKI J. (2004): Actualité des grandes traditions de la cohabitation et du dialogue des cultures en Europe du Centre Est [The Current State of the Great Traditions of Coexistence and Dialogue between Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe]. In: KŁOCZOWSKI J., BÉDARIDA F. (eds.): *L'héritage historique de la Res Publica de Plusieurs Nations [The Historical Legacy of the Res Publica of Several Nations]*. Lublin : Instytut Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej [Institute for Central and Eastern Europe].
- KNOX P., MAYER H. (2013): *Small Town Sustainability. Economic, Social and Environmental Innovation*. Basel: Birkhäuser Verlag.
- KORCELLI-OLEJNICZAK E., BIERZYŃSKI A., DWORZAŃSKI P., GROCHOWSKI M., PIOTROWSKI F., WĘCŁAWOWICZ G. (2017): *DIVERCITIES: Dealing with Urban Diversity. The Case of Warsaw*. Warsaw: Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences (IGSO PAS).
- KONECKA-SZYDŁOWSKA B. (2014): Socio-economic Situation of Small Towns of the Poznań Agglomeration. In: KWIATEK-SOŁTYS A., MAINET H., WIDERMANN K., EDOUARD J. C. (eds.): *Small and Medium Towns' Attractiveness at the Beginning of the 21st Century*. Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, pp. 133–146 (= Ceramac, 33).

- KONRAD H.-J. (1982): Verfassungsrechtliche Probleme von Städtepartnerschaften [Constitutional Problems of City Partnerships]. In: DITTMANN A., KILIAN M. (eds.): Kompetenzprobleme der auswärtigen Gewalt [Competence Problems of Foreign Power]. Tübingen: Attempto Verlag, pp. 138–188.
- KONTOS M. (2010): Europäische Politiken im Zuge der Globalisierung von Pflegearbeit [European Policies in the Wake of the Globalisation of Care Work]. Berlin: Gunda Werner Institute.
- KUROWSKA-PYSZ J., CASTANHO R. A., LOURES L. (2018): Sustainable Planning of Cross-border Co-operation: A Strategy for Alliances in Border Cities. In: *Sustainability*, 10 (5), article No. 1416. – <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10051416>.
- KWIATEK-SOLTYS A. (2015): Population Changes as Litmus Paper of the Socio-Economic Development Level of Small Towns in Poland. In: *Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia Geographica VIII*, pp. 39–53. – <https://bibliotekanauki.pl/articles/471746>.
- LABONTÉ R., MOHINDRA K., SCHRECKER T. (2011): The Growing Impact of Globalization for Health and Public Health Practice. In: *Annual Review of Public Health*, 32, pp. 263–283. – <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-031210-101225>.
- LANGENOHL A. (2015): Town Twinning, Transnational Connections and Trans-local Citizenship Practices in Europe. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- LEARY-OWHIN M. E., MCCARTHY J. P. (2019): The Routledge Handbook of Henri Lefebvre, The City and Urban Society. London: Routledge. – <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315266589>.
- LEFEBVRE H. (1996): The Production of Space. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing (1st English edition 1991; 1st French edition 1974).
- LIGHTFOOT S. (2010): The Europeanisation of International Development Policies: The Case of Central and Eastern European States. In: *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62 (2), pp. 329–350. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130903506854>.
- LIU S., VINCE R. (1999): The Cultural Context of Learning in International Joint Ventures. In: *Journal of Management Development*, 18(8), pp. 666–675. – <https://doi.org/10.1108/02621719910293765>.
- LOFLAND L. H. (1989): The Morality of Urban Public Life: The Emergence and Continuation of a Debate. In: *Places Journal*, 6 (1), pp. 18–23. – <https://placesjournal.org/article/the-morality-of-urban-public-life/>.
- LOO B. P. Y., CHENG A. H. T. (2010): Are There Useful Yardsticks of Population Size and Income Level for Building Metro Systems? Some Worldwide Evidence. In: *Cities*, 27 (5), pp. 299–306. – <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2010.02.003>.
- MARKUSZEWSKA I., TANSKAEN M., VILA SUBIRÓS J. (2016): Boundaries From Borders: Cross-Border Relationships in the Context of the Mental Perception of a Borderline – Experiences from Spanish-French and Polish-German Border Twin Towns. In: *Quaestiones Geographicae*, 35 (1), pp. 105–119. – <https://doi.org/10.1515/quageo-2016-0010>.
- MCCAULEY D. (2011): Bottom-Up Europeanization Exposed: Social Movement Theory and Non-state Actors in France. In: *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49 (5), pp. 1019–1042. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02160.x>.
- MCLARTY D., DAVIS N., GELLERS J., NASROLLAHI N., ALTENBERND E. (2014): Sisters in Sustainability: Municipal Partnerships for Social, Environmental, and Economic Growth. In: *Sustainability Science*, 9 (3), pp. 277–292. – <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-014-0248-6>.
- MEIJERS E., HOOGERBRUGGE M., HOLLANDER K. (2014): Twin Cities in the Process of Metropolisation. In: *Urban Research & Practice*, 7 (1), pp. 35–55. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2013.827906>.
- MIATSEHZ V. (2012): Belarussian-Germanic Artistic Culture Projects as the Means of Overcoming the Consequences of World War II in the 1990s – Early 2000s. In: *Bulletin of Polotsk State University. Series E*, 7, pp. 120–124.

- NEWMAN P., THORNLEY A. (2011): *Planning World Cities: Globalization and Urban Politics*. 2nd Edition. Basingstoke, UK / New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- NIJANDER-DUDZIŃSKA A. (2014): Kultura polityczna elit w miastach partnerskich pogranicza Polski, Słowacji, Węgier i Ukrainy. Koncepcja badań [Political Culture of Elites in the Border Towns of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Ukraine. Research Concept]. In: *Politeja*, 27 (1), pp. 327–346.
- NORMAN P. (2010). Identifying Change Over Time in Small Area Socio-economic Deprivation. In: *Applied Spatial Analysis and Policy*, 3, pp. 107–138. – <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12061-009-9036-6>.
- O'TOOLE K. (2000): From Mates to Markets: Australian Sister City Type Relationships. In: *Policy and Society*, 19 (1), pp. 43–64. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/10349952.2000.11876718>.
- PALMOWSKI J. (2011): The Europeanization of the Nation-State. In: *Journal of Contemporary History*, 46 (3), pp. 631–657. – <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022009411403336>.
- PASZTOR M., JAROSZ D. (2018): Nie tylko Fiat. Z dziejów stosunków polsko-włoskich 1945–1989 [Not Only Fiat. From the History of Polish-Italian Relations 1945–1989]. Warszawa [Warsaw]: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar [Scholar Publishing House].
- PINTSCH A. (2020): Decentralization in Ukraine and Bottom-Up European Integration. In: SHELEST H., RABINOVYCH M. (eds.): *Decentralization, Regional Diversity, and Conflict. The Case of Ukraine*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 339–363.
- PŁOSZAJ A. (2013): Two Faces of Territorial Cooperation in Europe: Twinning Cities and European Territorial Cooperation Programmes. In: GORZELAK G., ZAWALIŃSKA K. (eds.): *European Territories: From Cooperation to Integration?* Warszawa [Warsaw]: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar [Scholar Publishing House]. pp. 69–96.
- POLK M. (2011): Institutional Capacity-building in Urban Planning and Policy-making for Sustainable Development: Success or Failure? In: *Planning, Practice & Research*, 26 (2), pp. 185–206. – <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02697459.2011.560461>.
- RADAEELLI C. M. (2005): Europeanization: Solution or Problem? In: CINI M., BOURNE A. K. (eds.): *Palgrave Advances in European Union Studies*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 56–76.
- RAU F., RIECKMANN M. (2023): Bildung in einer Kultur der Nachhaltigkeit und Digitalität. Eine vergleichende Betrachtung grundlegender Diskurse und Konzepte [Education in a Culture of Sustainability and Digitality. A Comparative Analysis of Fundamental Discourses and Concepts]. In: *MedienPädagogik*, 52, pp. 21–46.
- RAVAZZOLI E., VALERO D. E. (2020): Social Innovation: An Instrument to Achieve the Sustainable Development of Communities. In: FILHO W. L., AZUL A. M., BRANDLI L., GÖKCIN ÖZUYAR P., WALL T. (eds.): *Sustainable Cities and Communities*. Cham: Springer Nature, pp. 1–10.
- ROBINSON J. (2011): Cities in a World of Cities: The Comparative Gesture. In: *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35 (1), pp. 1–23. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2427.2010.00982.x>.
- RUNGE A. (2016): Urban Agglomerations and Transformations of Medium-sized Towns in Poland. In: *Environmental & Socio-economic Studies*, 4 (3), pp. 41–55. – <https://doi.org/10.1515/environ-2016-0017>.
- RYAN H. E., MAZZILLI C. (2021): Debating the Value of Twinning in the United Kingdom: The Need for a Broader Perspective. In: *British Politics*, 19, pp. 450–471. – <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41293-021-00163-x>.
- SAKER L., LEE K., CANNITO B., GILMORE A., CAMPBELL-LENDRUM D. (2004): *Globalization and Infectious Diseases: A Review of the Linkages*. Geneva: WHO. – https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/68726/TDR_STR_SEB_ST_04.2.pdf.

- SAPRYKA V. A., TRAVIN R. A. (2017): Twin Cities Institute as a Tool for the Development of Border Territories. In: *Srednerussky Vestnik obshchestvennykh nauk* [Central Russian Bulletin of Social Sciences], 12 (4), pp. 91–99 (in Russian).
- SASSEN S. (1996): Whose City Is It? Globalization and the Formation of New Claims. In: *Public Culture*, 8 (2), pp. 205–223. – <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-8-2-205>.
- SASSEN S. (2018): *Cities in a World Economy*. Fifth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- SCHMID C. (2013): Networks, Borders, Differences: Towards a Theory of the Urban. In: BRENNER N. (ed.): *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*. Berlin / Boston: Jovis, pp. 67–81.
- SENETRA A., SZAREK-IWANIUK P. (2020): Socio-economic Development of Small Towns in the Polish Cittaslow Network – A Case Study. In: *Cities*, 103, article No. 102758. – <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2020.102758>.
- SERVILLO L., ATKINSON R., HAMDouch A. (2017): Small and Medium-Sized Towns in Europe: Conceptual, Methodological and Policy Issues. In: *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* (TESG), 108 (4), pp. 365–379. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12252>.
- SHORT J. R., BREITBACH C., BUCKMAN S., ESSEX J. (2000): From World Cities to Gateway Cities: Extending the Boundaries of Globalization Theory. In: *City. Analysis of Urban Change, Theory, Action*, 4 (3), pp. 317–340. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/713657031>.
- Sister Cities Convention (2001): Speech of the Deputy Prime Minister at the Convention in New Plymouth, NZ: Sister Cities Convention – Building Bridges. In: *Beehive.govt.nz* (Official Website of the New Zealand Government). – <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/node/10551>.
- ŚRODA-MURAWSKA S. (2020): Railway Feat. Culture – Rumia Library Effect as an Example of the Influence of Culture-led Regeneration in a Medium-sized City in Poland. In: *Cities*, 106, article No. 102875.
- ŚRODA-MURAWSKA S., GRZELAK-KOSTULSKA E., DĄBROWSKI L. S. (2019): The Phenomenon of Trend in Project-making: Contemporary Perspectives. In: DYMITROW M., INGELHAG K. (eds.): *Anatomy of a 21st Century Sustainability Project: The Untold Stories*. Gothenburg: Mistra Urban Futures, Chalmers University of Technology, pp. 63–70.
- STOTT L., MURPHY D. F. (2020): An Inclusive Approach to Partnerships for the SDGs: Using a Relationship Lens to Explore the Potential for Transformational Collaboration. In: *Sustainability*, 12 (19), article No. 7905. – <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12197905>.
- STOUT M., LOVE J. M. (2018): *Integrative Governance: Generating Sustainable Responses to Global Crises*. London: Routledge.
- WILLIAMS D. R. (2018): Stress and the Mental Health of Populations in Color: Advancing Our Understanding of Race-Related Stressors. In: *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 59 (4), pp. 466–485.
- SÝKORA L., MULÍČEK O. (2017): Territorial Arrangements of Small and Medium-Sized Towns from a Functional-Spatial Perspective. In: *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* (TESG), 108 (4), pp. 438–455. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12249>.
- SZEWCZYK J. (2007): Zagraniczne związki partnerskie polskich samorządów miast, powiatów i województw [Foreign Partnerships of Polish Municipalities, Districts and Voivodships]. *Prace Geograficzne* [Geographical Papers], 117, pp. 259–273.
- TAYLOR P. J., NI P., DERUDDER B., HOYLER M., HUANG J., WITLOX F. (eds.) (2011): *Global Urban Analysis: A Survey of Cities in Globalization*. London / Washington: Earthscan.
- THORNLEY A., NEWMAN P. (2011): *Planning World Cities: Globalization and Urban Politics*. 2nd Edition. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- UNKOVSKI-KORICA V. (2021): Non-aligned Cities in the Cold War: Municipal Internationalism, Town Twinning and the Standing Conference of Towns of Yugoslavia, c.1950–c.1985. In:

- The International History Review, 44 (3), pp. 559–576. – <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2021.1960585>.
- VION A. (2002): Europe from the Bottom Up: Town Twinning in France During the Cold War. In: Contemporary European History, 11 (4), pp. 623–640. – <https://doi.org/10.1017/S096077730200406X>.
- WACH K. (2015): Conceptualizing Europeanization: Theoretical Approaches and Research Designs. In: STANEK P., WACH K. (eds.): Europeanization Processes from the Mesoeconomic Perspective: Industries and Policies. Cracow: Cracow University of Economics, pp. 11–23). – <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.4228.4647>.
- WEAVER M., TAN H., CROSSAN K. (2021): Systems and Systemic Approaches for Attaining the SDGs Across Partnerships. In: FILHO W. L., AZUL A. M., BRANDLI L., LANGE SALVIA A., WALL T. (eds.): Partnerships for the Goals. Cham: Springer, pp. 1247–1260. – https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-95963-4_92.
- YEATES N. (2009): Globalizing Care Economies and Migrant Workers: Explorations in Global Care Chains. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- ZELINSKY W. (1991): The Twinning of the World: Sister Cities in Geographic and Historical Perspective. In: Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 81 (1), pp. 1–31. – <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1991.tb01676.x>.

Websites

- https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1544 (last access: 15.05.2022).
- <https://oko.press/strefy-wolne-od-lgbt-niemieckie-miasto-stendal-jako-pierwsze-reaguje-na-apel-oko-press/> (last access: 10.10.2022).
- <https://oko.press/wysylamy-52-donosy-na-strefy-wolne-od-lgbt-do-blizniaczych-regionow-ue-zerwijcie-umowe/> (last access: 22.05.2022).
- <https://queer.pl/artukul/204077/czy-zrywane-wspolpracy-to-dobra-droga-poklosie-uchwal-anty-lgbt> (last access: 22.05.2022).
- <https://regiony.rp.pl/biznes/art35767301-polskie-miasta-zrywaja-kontakty-partnerskie-z-rosyjskim-miastami> (last access: 10.05.2022).
- <https://samorząd.pap.pl/kategoria/aktualnosci/samorzady-wypowiadaja-umowy-partnerstwa-z-miastami-w-rosji-i-na-bialorusi> (last access: 10.05.2022).
- <https://sip.lex.pl/komentarze-i-publicacje/artykuly/strefy-wolne-od-lgbt-a-aksjologiczny-aspekt-partnerstwa-miast-151399436> (last access: 10.10.2022).
- <https://tarnow.naszemiasto.pl/czeski-mikulov-nie-zerwie-wspolpracy-z-tuchowem-z-powodu/ar/c15-8264900> (last access: 22.05.2022).
- <https://uml.lodz.pl/aktualnosci/artykul/lodz-zrywa-umowy-partnerskie-z-miastami-w-rosji-id47909/2022/2/26/> (last access: 10.05.2022).
- <https://wiadomosci.dziennik.pl/swiat/artykuly/6445413,strefy-wolne-od-lgbt-miasta-francja-polska.html> (last access: 22.05.2022).
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/18/us/russian-government-sister-cities-ukraine.html> (last access: 10.05.2022).
- <https://www.rp.pl/kraj/art600491-strefy-wolne-od-lgbt-polskie-miasta-nie-zalapaly-sie-do-programu-ue> (last access: 10.10.2022).
- <https://www.se.pl/tarnow/skandal-francuzi-zrywaja-wspolprace-z-tuchowem-wszystko-przez-uchwale-anty-lgbt-aa-ESi6-F8Rv-wbvU.html> (last access: 22.05.2022).