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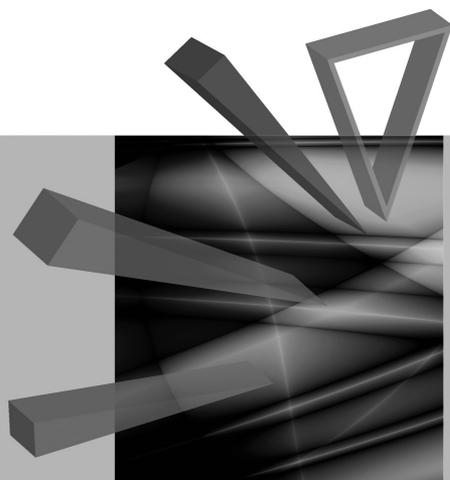
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Planning and Evaluation Aspects



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Contents

Introduction.....	7
Ryszard Broł: Theory and practice of local development strategic planning .	9
Andrzej Sztando: Local development strategic planning and social responsibility of communal authorities: the Polish experience.....	20
Tatiana Zhelyuk: Strategic planning as a tool to enhance the competitiveness of territories	31
Justyna Anders, Wawrzyniec Rudolf: Placing collaboration in LED strategies – evidence from selected Polish cities.....	40
Grażyna Karmowska, Katarzyna Bilyj, Katarzyna Mazur: The development of the Rewal and Bogdaniec communes – a comparative study.....	48
Ewelina Szczech-Pietkiewicz: Competitiveness of Polish cities in a European environment.....	58
Veronika Humlerová, Eva Cudlínová, Ivana Faltová Leitmanová, Renata Klufová, Ladislav Rolínek, Milan Jílek: Rural development in terms of economic support – a case study from the Czech Republic	68
Janusz Sasak, Beata Domańska-Szaruga: Application of process benchmarking in improving the functioning of public administration.....	81
Sara Bonini Baraldi, Luca Zan: Managing heritage sites in China. The case of the Guan Lin Temple	90
Artur J. Kożuch, Katarzyna Peter-Bombik: Target costing as an instrument to ensure efficient fulfillment of public needs at local government units..	104
Joanna Kenc: The effects of town twinning in the Lower Silesia voivodeship – a comparison of the situation in small, medium and large towns	112
Dorota Sikora-Fernandez: Private cities. Spatial and economic consequences of gated communities in Poland	122
Miroslav Žižka: Multi-dimensional evaluation of economic pillar of territorial analytical data	130
Katarzyna Przybyła, Alina Kulczyk-Dynowska: Economic evolution of the Lower Silesia subregions.....	139
Edward Wiśniewski: Evaluation of investment attractiveness of the Central Pomerania communes by local governments	147

Streszczenia

Ryszard Broł: Teoria i praktyka planowania strategicznego rozwoju lokalnego	19
Andrzej Sztando: Planowanie strategiczne rozwoju lokalnego a społeczna odpowiedzialność gminnych władz. Polskie doświadczenia	30
Tatiana Zhelyuk: Planowanie strategiczne jako narzędzie do zwiększania konkurencyjności terytorialnej.....	39
Justyna Anders, Wawrzyniec Rudolf: Umiejscowienie współdziałania w strategiach rozwoju lokalnego na przykładzie wybranych miast w Polsce	47
Grażyna Karmowska, Katarzyna Biłyj, Katarzyna Mazur: Rozwój gmin Rewal i Bogdaniec – studium porównawcze.....	57
Ewelina Szczech-Pietkiewicz: Konkurencyjność polskich miast w otoczeniu europejskim	66
Veronika Humlerová, Eva Cudlínová, Ivana Faltová Leitmanová, Renata Klufová, Ladislav Rolínek, Milan Jílek: Rozwój obszarów wiejskich w warunkach wsparcia gospodarczego. Studium przypadku z Republiki Czeskiej.....	80
Janusz Sasak, Beata Domańska-Szaruga: Aplikacja benchmarkingu procesów w doskonaleniu funkcjonowania administracji publicznej	88
Sara Bonini Baraldi, Luca Zan: Zarządzanie miejscami dziedzictwa kulturowego w Chinach: studium przypadku świątyni Guan Lin	103
Artur J. Kożuch, Katarzyna Peter-Bombik: Rachunek kosztów docelowych jako instrument zapewniający sprawne zaspokajanie potrzeb publicznych w JST	111
Joanna Kenc: Efekty współpracy partnerskiej w województwie dolnośląskim – porównanie sytuacji w małych, średnich i dużych miastach.....	121
Dorota Sikora-Fernandez: Miasta prywatne. Przestrzenne i ekonomiczne konsekwencje zamkniętych osiedli mieszkaniowych w Polsce	129
Miroslav Žižka: Wielowymiarowa ewaluacja gospodarczego filaru terytorialnych danych analitycznych	138
Katarzyna Przybyła, Alina Kulczyk-Dynowska: Przekształcenia gospodarcze w subregionach Dolnego Śląska	146
Edward Wiśniewski: Ocena atrakcyjności inwestycyjnej gmin Pomorza Środkowego według samorządów lokalnych	158

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PLACING COLLABORATION IN LED STRATEGIES – EVIDENCE FROM SELECTED POLISH CITIES*

Summary: This paper aims to determine the declared approaches of local governments to the collaboration with stakeholders representing selected groups of customers in selected Polish cities based on the analysis of strategic documents. These groups represent both external and internal mobile factors of socio-economic development, with tourists, investors and prospective students being the former, and local entrepreneurs the latter. The research was carried out in Polish regional capitals with metropolitan ambitions based on the proposal regarding the delimitation of metropolitan areas by EUROREG.

Keywords: good governance, local development, collaboration.

1. Introduction

The scope of the paper is to determine the declared approaches of local government to the collaboration with stakeholders representing selected groups of customers in selected Polish cities, based on an analysis of strategic documents. The authors concentrated on the processes aimed at attracting investors, tourists and students and activities for creating favorable conditions for the development of entrepreneurship. The stakeholders related to these target groups should be the potential partners for the city authorities and managers, as their objectives should complement the self-government's mission. Integrated actions by different local actors willing to share their resources may result in new investments, inflow of tourists, new students and the development of entrepreneurship in a specific location. The ability to interact with local residents and institutional stakeholders appears to be an important factor in the context of local government policy development. According to the European Commission's proposals, the new cohesion policy for 2014–2020 should take into account the potential of cities as growth engines for the adjacent areas [European Commission 2012]. It is probable that in Poland the regional and metropolitan centers will obtain legal instruments for the creation of development activities in

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metropolitan areas [*Założenia krajowej polityki...* 2012]. In this context, the willingness of local authorities to interact with other organizations becomes more important.

2. Theoretical framework

The term ‘collaboration’ originally appeared in business management. In order to distinguish it from other forms of organizational interaction with its stakeholders, Gray proposed four elements that the relationship have to involve in order to treat the relation as collaboration [Gray 1989]:

- the interdependence of the stakeholders,
- the ability to address differences constructively,
- joint ownership of decisions,
- collective responsibility for the future of the partnership.

Collaboration between organizations which are formally autonomous, but functionally interdependent, is also crucial in the field of public management [Ferlie, Lynn, Pollitt (eds.) 2005]. For many public organizations, collaboration has become the primary strategy of coping with modern problems, such as complexity in the policy process, turbulent environments, dispersion of resources and expertise, and the constant flow of new information [Fleishman 2009]. Thompson and Perry [2006] underline the significance of the long term relationship in collaboration. They claim, that: “it is a process in which autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is the process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions” [Thomson, Perry 2006].

On the other hand, collaboration is a difficult task because it requires the cooperation of many organizations that have diverse objectives, and these are often conflicting with each other [Considine, Giguère (eds.) 2008]. A number of authors have observed that it is possible for collaborative partners to cooperate and compete for resources at the same time. The relationship lasts until the desired objective has been achieved [Stiles 2001].

According to American researchers [Agranoff, McGuire 2003], collaboration is not autonomous; to constitute the process of bringing the benefits of multilateral external relations, collaboration must be consciously managed. The assumption of their research is that the city, in trying to strengthen its economic competitive position, should not exclusively rely on traditional grants, loans, or interest-rate subsidies, but also must use numerous stakeholders to strengthen the metropolitan economy.

For the purpose of this study, the cross-sectoral dimension of the local government relationships is the most relevant. Cross-sector collaboration is the linking or sharing of information, goodwill, and good intentions, resources, activities, and power or

capacities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly what could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately [Bryson, Crosby 2008].

3. Previous research

The legal forms of collaboration between self-governments in Poland have been extensively presented by Ofiarska [2008]. She revised the forms of collaborations between territories in Poland. She claims that the advantage of the current legal solutions in Poland is their variety and flexibility, on the other hand, the regulations are fairly general. The law should not rigidly categorize these issues, but in Poland the problem is the lack of a collaborative culture among public officials and managers and low social and institutional trust [Szczepański, Bierwiazzonek, Nawrocki 2008; Anders 2011].

Unfortunately, several studies indicate that the Polish self-governmental administration has a serious deficit of ability to collaborate [Kulesza 2009]. This applies to all its levels (commune, district and region). Officials lack the capacity and willingness to jointly solve local problems. The research by Rudolf [2010], conducted in Polish regions, has shown the early stage of the collaboration orientation of both regional politicians and public company managers. The results of the study identified the factors strengthening the positive approach to the collaboration of the representatives of both sides of the regional authorities, i.e. Marshall offices and their institutional stakeholders, and the factors which constitute the barriers. Implementing the long term education process targeted at both regional politicians and high level executives (public company managers) would facilitate the collaboration actions. These are key for stimulating the economic development by exploring the potential of relations between metropolis and region.

4. Research method

The study's objective was to compare the readiness of the local authorities in the selected cities to adopt a collaborative approach in the design and implementation of local development strategies. The focus was on activities aimed at the increase of the external attractiveness of the analyzed cities, i.e. the potential to mobilize an inflow of tourists, investors and prospective students. Local entrepreneurs were also considered as an important target group, since they build networks with potential investors and serve as job creators for graduates. The selection of localizations was based on typology developed by EUROREG in 2009 for the delimitation of metropolitan areas in Poland. As a result, the following cities were chosen for comparisons:

- metropolitan centres: Kraków, Łódź and Poznań;
- regional centres, class A : Szczecin and Lublin;
- regional centres, class B: Olsztyn, Kielce and Rzeszów.

Warszawa, as the capital city, was excluded from the comparison, based on its greater economic potential. Trójmiasto (Gdańsk, Gdynia, and Sopot) as well as the Silesian Conurbation (based on Central Statistical Office typology – 19 cities with Katowice as its main hub) were not taken into account, because it would require carrying out research in all cities belonging to a local centre. Similarly, Torun and Bydgoszcz were excluded, since in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie there is a division of functions of the regional capital between Bydgoszcz – the seat of the centrally appointed voivode (governor) and Toruń – the seat of the regional assembly and the voivodeship's Marshall.

All the cities under examination are capital regions. The differentiating factors include: population, academic potential, cultural potential, external attractiveness, managerial functions and accessibility by air. Managerial functions were measured by the number of enterprises based in the city that form economic networks extending local dimensions; academic potential was measured by the number of students and their participation in the international R&D projects, cultural potential was assessed based on the number of seats in cinemas, external attractiveness was measured by the number of tourists staying overnight [Smętkowski, Gorzelak, Jałowiecki 2009, p. 47].

The recent data of the Central Statistical Office regarding tourism attractiveness, FDI attractiveness, local entrepreneurship attractiveness and GDP, confirm that the delimitation proposed by EUROREG obtains reliable results, especially in the first group. There are differences between Szczecin and Lublin in terms of GDP, and external attractiveness that would place Lublin in class B. Lublin is, however, one of the biggest regional centers in the eastern Poland that is lagging behind in terms of economic development, both at national and European level. All the cities in group B that were selected for study are also located in eastern voivodships. This approach enables to compare cases of cities differentiated on the basis of criteria of economic potential, size, and external attractiveness.

During the quantitative content analysis, strategic documents regarding local development were systematically analysed based on a code system that comprised a set of phrases describing governance indicators and collaboration practices. The objective was to assess the frequency of occurrence of specific phrases such as “governance”, “good governance”, “joint decision-making”, “participation”, “consultations”, “partnership”, “cooperation”, “collaboration”, “coalitions” and “networks” in strategic documents as an indirect measure of the collaborative orientation of local authorities. It was assumed that the presence and greater frequency of these phrases would indicate a willingness to use new methods of local governance in development strategies by engaging local stakeholders. It should be noted, however, that quantitative content analysis does not take into account the meaning of specific phrases in a given context, so calculations should be interpreted cautiously. Similarly analysed documents differ with regards to the length and level

of detail, so during the interpretation both the frequency of occurrence and percentage value should be taken into account.

Phrases such as “governance”, “good governance” and “networked governance” were analysed separately, while “joint decision making”, “consultations” and “participation” were aggregated into participation being one of the good governance indicators, and “cooperation”, “collaboration”, “coalitions” and “partnership” were aggregated into “partnership” as another good governance indicator.

5. Results

During data collection, special attention was paid to the declared readiness of the authorities to cooperate with the external institutional partners within certain processes (attracting investors, tourism, students and creating facilities for entrepreneurs).

The purpose was also to determine the orientation of self-government authorities towards a specific target group. In all cases, local citizens were those who received most attention in strategic documents both at regional and local level (see Table 1).

Table 1. Occurrence of phrases related to specific target groups and good governance practices in City Development Strategies

		Lublin	Kielce	Olsztyn	Szczecin	Rzeszow	Kraków	Poznań	Łódź
Document		City Development Strategy							
Target group	Local citizens	29 (45%)	28(22%)	26(43%)	23(28%)	2(50%)	34(55%)	169(48%)	21(68%)
	Local entrepreneurs	11(17%)	24(19%)	14(23%)	24(30%)	0(0)	9(15%)	54(15%)	4(13%)
	Investors	8(13%)	23(18%)	7(11%)	13(16%)	2(50%)	13(21%)	36(10%)	3(10%)
	Students	3(5%)	7(6%)	1(2%)	3(4%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	19(5%)	1(3%)
	Tourists	13(20%)	45(35%)	13(21%)	18(22%)	0(0%)	6(10%)	72(21%)	2(6%)
Total %		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%(17%)	100%
Governance indicators	Effectiveness	20 (32%)	19 (39%)	7 (16%)	21(24%)	1(33%)	12(20%)	27(17%)	13(52%)
	Efficiency	4 (6%)	7(14%)	5(11%)	0(0%)	1(33%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
	Participation	1(2%)	4(8%)	11(24%)	3(3%)	0(0%)	12(20%)	18(11%)	7(28%)
	Partnership	37(60%)	19(39%)	22(9%)	62(72%)	1(33%)	35(59%)	114(72%)	5(20%)
Total %		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Good governance		0	0	0	2	2	0	3	3
Networked governance		2(0)	1(0)	0	0	0	0	4	0

Source: own elaboration.

In general, the following profiles of cities could be observed:

- cities concentrating primarily on local inhabitants and tourists: Poznań, Lublin and Rzeszów;

- cities concentrating on local inhabitants and local entrepreneurs: Łódź and Olsztyn;
- cities concentrating on local inhabitants and investors: Kraków;
- cities where dominating target groups were not local inhabitants but either local entrepreneurs (Szczecin) or tourists (Kielce).

The results of the quantitative content analysis for the City Development Strategy of Rzeszów were inconclusive due to the fact that only four phrases related to target groups were found. Taking into account good governance indicators, it could be observed that the categories related to “effectiveness” and “partnership” were far more frequent than “efficiency” and “participation”. Terms such as “good governance” and “joint decision making” were explicitly mentioned in the city development strategies of Poznań (3 times), Łódź (3 times), Szczecin (2 times) and Rzeszów (2 times), being isolated phrases not included in the significant parts of documents. The results of the quantitative content analysis for the City Development Strategy of Rzeszów were inconclusive due to the fact that only three phrases related to good governance indicators were found. Phrases related to partnership were more frequent in Poznań, Szczecin, Lublin and Kraków development strategies, while effectiveness ranked higher in Łódź and Kielce. Participation related phrases were also more visible in Łódź, Olsztyn and Kraków strategic documents. It can be noticed that socio-economic potential is not sufficient to explain these differences, since leaders in specific indicators of good governance, as declared by local development strategies, are in each of the three groups analysed by the authors. In order to draw conclusions on collaboration readiness as declared in strategic documents at local level, further studies engaging public company managers and stakeholders are required.

6. Conclusions

The results indicate that at the discourse level there are no important differences in approaches to collaboration and public governance -with the exception of Poznań and those market segments that cities perceive as strategically important. Content analysis confirmed that cities are result-oriented and place strong emphasis on effectiveness as an important value in public governance. Partnership and collaboration are treated instrumentally as a tool that increases the effectiveness of local development policies. Theories on collaboration have been built especially on explanations of strategic decision making within organizations; less attention has been devoted to the human element in collaborative decisions [Gazley 2008] and this requires further study. Resource dependence theories have been especially prominent, with their ability to explain how a need to increase resources or reduce competition drives one organization’s strategic decision to ally with another [O’Leary et. al. 2009, p. 8]. However, the compared cities differ in terms of socio-economic potential. This indicates that resource dependency offers only a partial explanation to the processes of collaboration.

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UMIEJSCOWIENIE WSPÓLDZIAŁANIA W STRATEGIACH ROZWOJU LOKALNEGO NA PRZYKŁADZIE WYBRANYCH MIAST W POLSCE

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest określenie stopnia gotowości władz lokalnych do współpracy i współdziałania z interesariuszami reprezentującymi wybrane grupy klientów JST w wybranych miastach w Polsce na podstawie analizy dokumentów strategicznych. Skoncentrowano się na tych elementach strategii, które dotyczą działań wobec wewnętrznych i zewnętrznych grup charakteryzujących się zwiększoną mobilnością: turystów, inwestorów, studentów oraz lokalnych przedsiębiorców. Badanie dotyczyło stolic wybranych regionów na bazie delimitacji obszarów metropolitarnych zaproponowanej przez EUROREG.

Słowa kluczowe: dobre rządzenie, rozwój lokalny, współdziałanie.