Session 2:

New trends in local governance West and East

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Dr Miro Haček, Associate Professor, Dr Irena Bačlija, Research Fellow, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana

Dynamics of administrative capacity in Slovenian municipal administrations

A suitable quality level of the main functions and tasks of municipal administrations is a fundamental condition for the existence and development of every activity, not only for market-oriented organisations but also the public sector. Municipalities in Slovenia have not adopted a general policy on quality and it is therefore difficult to speak of the optimisation of work in a municipal administration, the efficiency and rationality of work, cost reduction, nor to evaluate the performance of an administration and the individual civil servants it employs. The authors of this article analyse the results of an empirical research projects on administrative capacity carried out in 2007 and 2012 among the directors of Slovenian municipal administrations and an analysis of the topic in the context of reorganisation of local administrations. By means of the Administrative Capacity Index, they evaluate the degrees of individual municipalities' administrative capacities and establish at what size (according to its population) a municipality can be regarded as capable of administration.

Dr Marta Lackowska, Assistant Professor, Department of Local Development and Policy, Faculty of Geography and Regional Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland

Europeanization of post socialist cities as a type of outward political rescaling: The case of Poland

Access of the Central-Eastern Europe states to the European Union has opened a new promising field of empirical research for students of European integration. In parallel, a growing body of literature deals with the presumed increased space for urban political manoeuvre, linked to the phenomenon of de- and renationalisation. Within this approach, the impact of Europeanization on urban politics can be analysed as a special type of outward political rescaling. In the paper I take this perspective. I look at the political strategies the post socialist cities adopt in front of the EU political multilevel system as a part of their wider strategy of political internationalisation.

The empirical evidence is based on the study of the 12 largest Polish cities, members of Eurocities and other lobbing organisations. Leaning on the Klijn and Koppenjan (2000) typology of possible orientation of public authorities in front of the global pressures, I discuss the character of urban strategies developed in three fields of activities:
- networking (activities in Eurocities, Union of Baltic Cities etc.);
- bilateral activities (cities twinning);
- individual undertakings (like beating for and hosting big international events, or using the EU funds).

Simplifying, we may connect reactive policies with top-down Europeanization (adjusting to new possibilities), and creative ones (corresponding to the more advanced stages by Klijn and Koppenjan) with bottom-up Europeanization. The main question of the study is: What is the character of the internationalisation activities of the largest Polish cities? Is it rather reactive or creative?

Considering post socialist context means tracing some interesting specificities steaming from the fact that Polish cities have entered the global (and EU) system only recently. As a result we may expect them to act rather passively and reactively than dominantly in the new context. Moreover, taking into account previous studies showing the weakness of strategic management in local policies in Poland, we can assume that non-strategic conformist behaviour prevails also in internationalization. Keeping this in mind I am especially interested in detecting any signs opposing this thesis, that is showing strategic thinking and creative activities of Polish cities in front of the new possibilities created by the domestic political transformation, globalization pressures and the EU membership.