

4 City partnerships and networks

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Recommended additional reading:

- Abrahamsen, R. (2004). The power of partnerships in global governance. *Third World Quarterly*, 25(8), 1453–1467. Retrieved from EBSCO Host database.
- Habitat International (2009). Transnational city-to-city co-operation: Issues arising from theory and practice (Editorial). *Habitat International*, 33, 131–133. Retrieved from Science Direct database.
- De Villiers, J.C. (2006). Achieving the millennium development goals through city-to-city partnerships, origins, history and context of city-to-city partnerships, paper delivered at the 50th Anniversary Conference of Sister Cities International in Washington DC on 13 July 2006.

4.1 Chapter Overview

Having a look at current literature regarding city partnerships, it can be observed that lots of cities are linked to another city through partnership agreements (Villiers et al., 2007, p. 1). This chapter intends to give an overview of the concept of city partnerships and of its real importance for urban areas around the globe. Firstly, the terminology regarding city partnerships is introduced. Then, the origins and historical importance of city partnerships are explained and the status quo and trends relevant for this networking form are introduced. This is followed by a possible classification of city partnerships and a short description of important international organizations relevant for partner cities. Last but not least, existing literature on the topic is analyzed and key findings regarding city partnerships are summarized.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this chapter successful students will be able to:

1. Use appropriate terminology
2. Understand the origins and historical importance of city partnerships
3. Recognize trends of city partnerships
4. Identify current literature on city partnerships.

4.2 Introduction

As the competitive environment within the EU becomes more and more intense, it is a major goal of many regions to keep their positions as high quality living and cultural areas, well-known industrial locations and popular centers of education and know-how. This competitiveness among different regions in Europe is especially problematic for cities or urban areas, as they are considered to be the key success factors within this competition. Searching for ways how to improve their so-called urban or regional competitiveness, many government officials have realized that their existing city partnerships might have – among others – the potential to support the achievement of their city's goals.

Having a look at city networking around the globe, it can be observed that nearly every city has closed some kind of international linkage today. Those links are usually made in the form of city partnerships, which are – expressed in simplified terms – an agreement between two or more parties (i.e. city councils or other urban administrations) that have agreed to work together for mutual benefit. However, in most cases, such city partnerships are seen as a mean of expressing friendship and furthering cultural exchange only, whereas their potential to contribute to a city's overall strategy is often neglected.

This chapter starts with a general introduction to strategic city management and city networking. In the beginning, the three most important forms of networking, namely networks, co-operations and partnerships are distinguished from each other. Afterwards, the focus is put on the third networking form, the partnerships solely. The origins and historical importance of city-to-city (C2C) partnerships are explained as they give valuable insights for understanding today's C2C linkages. This is followed by a description of the status quo and trends of city partnerships, which can be expected within the next years. Focus is put on the global dimension of C2C partnerships on the one hand and on insights into C2C links in Europe and between European countries on the other hand. Further sub-chapters hereafter deal with important international organizations, which are relevant for C2C networking partners, and a possible classification of C2C links in more detail. This classification is based on the dimensions geographical scope, co-operation structure, active participants, external support and objectives of C2C links nowadays. To conclude this chapter, existing literature about the topic is analyzed and key findings of other cities engaged in C2C co-operations are introduced.

4.3 Terminology

There is no generally accepted definition of city networking and its different forms in current literature. The variety of terms, which are used for this concept, is not simplifying the matter either (Habitat International, 2009, p. 131 as well as Villiers et al., 2007, p. 1). This sub-chapter tries to give an idea of what city networking is and how the different forms of networking can be distinguished from each other. Starting with some remarks on which types of networking can be observed nowadays and what characterizes them, the chapter will later on focus on one specific form of city networking, namely city partnerships, in particular. As the concept of city partnerships is of more relevance for strategic city management, two definitions provided by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) will be introduced to the reader in detail.

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Generally speaking, every formal agreement between two or more parties (i.e. cities or other urban administrations) that have agreed to work together in the pursuit of common goals can be assigned to the area of city networking. As it is with the parties to decide upon the scope of objectives, duration, membership and alteration of their networking agreement, it is of no wonder that city networking occurs in many different ways (UNDP, 2010), (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009, p. 202), (Hoetjes, 2009, p. 160). In current literature, the concept of cities engaged in networking is called city partnerships, city-to-city (C2C) networks, C2C co-operation, twinning, friendship link, sister cities, municipal partnerships, international co-operation, decentralized co-operation etc., which already demonstrates the wide variety of networking forms. In many cases and in many academic papers, these expressions refer to the same kind of relationship between cities and are used simultaneously without any respect to their difference in meaning. However, in the strict sense, those terms may refer to different kinds of city networking in terms of amount of involvement, commitment, objectives, duration and others. Ewijk and Baud (2009) give a good overview how to distinguish different networking forms from each other. In their opinion, the expression *city networking* is seen as an umbrella term, whereas the terms *networks*, *co-operations* and *partnerships* are different categories of city networking. This relationship between city networking, networks, co-operations and partnerships is illustrated in Figure 5.



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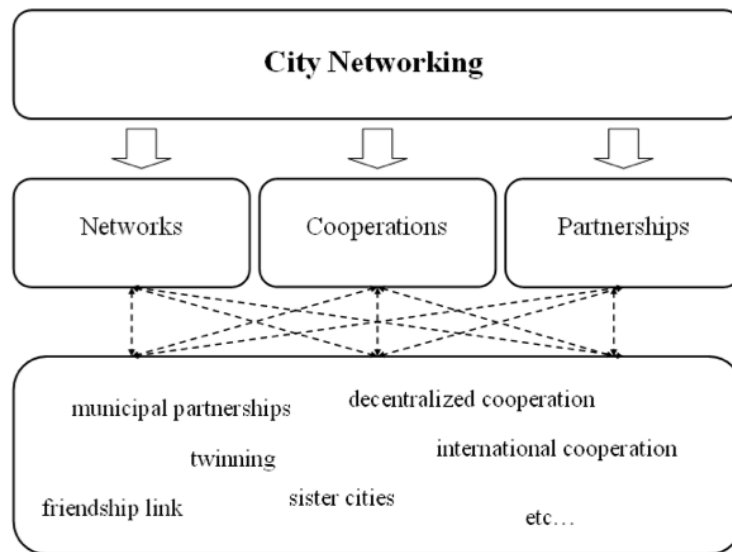


Figure 5: The Three Types of City Networking
 Adapted from Ewijk and Baud, 2009, p. 220

As it can be seen above, city networking can be distinguished into three different forms, namely networks, co-operations and partnerships. Those three types of city networking have many synonyms on their part, which cannot be assigned to one of the three categories of city networking exactly. The difference between networks, co-operations and partnerships according to Ewijk/Baud (2009) are further explained throughout the following paragraphs.

Networks

Besides C2C co-operations and partnerships, networks are one of the three different forms of city networking. According to Ewijk and Baud (2009), networks or C2C networks, are defined as a relatively loose form of international co-operation with horizontal information exchange, without hierarchy and without long-term commitments. Thus, they can be seen as the simplest form of international co-operation. Being engaged in C2C networks, cities or urban administrations usually benefit from information exchange within the network primarily. Furthermore, networks, which usually have a thematic and/or geographical focus, are oftentimes characterized by members, who contribute a lot to the overall goals, whereas other members only take but do not give. Examples for C2C networks are CITYNET or The Mega-Cities Project (Ewijk and Baud, 2009, p. 220), (Keiner and Kim, 2007, pp. 1370–1393). CITYNET, which is the Regional Network of Local Authorities for the Management of Human Settlements for Asian-Pacific countries, is a network which brings together local authorities in order to support them in effectively managing their urban development processes by exchanging expertise and experience among the members (CITYNET, 2010), (Hosaka, 1993, pp. 136–137), (Tjandradewi and Marcotullio, 2009, pp. 166–167). The Mega-City Project is a network of mega cities and organizations within those cities, which are trying to solve problems faced by such cities in the areas poverty, environment and participation (‘Mega-Cities Project’, 2010).

Co-operations

Co-operations are seen as an organized interaction for a common end and mutual benefit. The expressions C2C co-operations, international co-operation and decentralized co-operation can be used synonymously. An international co-operation is seen to lay in-between of networks and partnerships and in practice, a line is oftentimes hard to draw (Ewijk and Baud, 2009, pp. 219–221). Especially when it comes to academic articles and scientific papers, the term *co-operation* is oftentimes used for every kind of link between two or more cities, making it nearly impossible to distinguish co-operations according to Ewijk and Baud's classification from other forms of networking activities (Ewijk/Baud, 2009, pp. 219–221), (Villiers, 2009, p. 149). Referring to Villiers et al. (2007), partnering agreements, which are called *co-operations* by the partners themselves, might also be partnerships according to Ewijk and Baud's definition. The concept of partnerships is described hereafter.

Partnerships

According to Ewijk and Baud (2009), a partnership distinguishes itself from other forms of international linkages in the way that a partnership is a "...highly structured form of co-operation with long-term commitments, concrete activities, a form of contract and participating partners able to operate autonomously". Equality, power and trust between the partners should be the main aspects of every partnership (Ewijk and Baud, 2009, p. 220), (Hewitt, 1999, p. 30). Villiers (2009) argues that partnerships between cities are comparable to alliances between organizations as they are often characterized by shared objectives, focus on long-term strategic goals, joint decision-making, commitment of resources, creating advantages for both parties involved, and driven by the same forces than alliances between organizations such as globalization (Villiers, 2009, p. 150). The terms (town) twinning, friendship links or sister cities have the same meaning as partnership. A partnership is therefore besides networks and co-operations the form of international linkages with the strongest ties between the partners (Ewijk and Baud, 2009, p. 220), (Hewitt, 1999, p. 30).

As this chapter focuses on city partnerships in particular, two further definitions for this kind of international linkage are introduced at this point. The first definition was made by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the second definition is from the Council of European Municipalities (CEMR).

First Definition – United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

A definition, which might apply to all existing city partnerships, is the following made by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The UNDP (2000) defines a city partnership or linking as “...a long-term partnership between communities in different cities or towns. A link is a relationship signifying mutuality. A link enables partner communities to engage themselves in matters of mutual interest and which they themselves determine. The agenda is open.” In this respect, the term community refers to citizens, the local government administration, community based organizations and other groups in rural or urban areas as well. The mutual interest can cover social, cultural, economic, technological or environmental issues and should lead to a situation, where both parties are able to learn and gain from each other (UNDP, 2000), (UN-Habitat & WACLAC [United Nations Human Settlements Programme & World Association of Cities and Local Authorities Coordination], 2003, p. 8). The most important part which characterizes a partnership is therefore mutuality (UNDP, 2000), (Johnson/Wilson, 2009, p. 216). The mutual interest is defined together by both cities as “generating positive stimuli for the economic development of both cities”. Besides several specific goals, the cities identified the exchange of information, experiences and co-operation in EU projects as the basis for the partnership. Thus, it fulfills all prerequisites for being a C2C link according to UNDP.

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Second Definition – Council of European Municipalities (CEMR)

The second definition regarding city partnerships was defined by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). According to CEMR (2008b), partnerships may be based on long-term twinning relationships – as the definition of the UNDP already reveals – but may also be limited to a defined period of time and a series of agreed activities or projects.

Altogether it can be said that the terminology regarding city networking can be really confusing and is not clearly defined in current literature. For this text, the terms C2C (project) partnerships, city/project partnerships, (international) co-operation, town twinning, twinning, twinning initiatives and C2C links are used synonymously to indicate the relationships between partner cities and project partners. Next, the current situation of city partnerships which are the relevant form of international co-operations is explained in more detail, starting with its origins and historical importance.

4.4 The Origins and Historical Importance of City Partnerships

Although C2C networks are due to the United Nations Millennium Goals and the increased commitment to problems of developing countries in more demand than ever before, the concept of cities co-operating with each other for mutual gain is nothing new (Keiner and Kim, 2007, p. 1372). Besides city alliances in ancient and medieval times, the present form of C2C linkages appeared after WWII. Constant development, increased professionalism and changes in terms of member countries, goals and motives throughout the decades after the last world war influenced the conclusion of new city partnerships considerably until the present form of C2C partnerships emerged (Hoetjes, 2009), (Buis, 2009, p. 191). The following paragraphs give a short summary about how C2C linkages and partnerships developed after WWII by referring to Hoetjes (2009), who identified six different layers or waves, which describe the changes in C2C networking during those decades.

First City Partnerships after WWII (First Layer of City Partnerships)

To start with, cities always engaged in some kind of partnership with other cities for mutual gain throughout history – for example the German Hanseatic cities. However, the modern concept of city partnerships evolved after World War II only, when an initiative to overcome the deadlocked conflicts between European countries, the European continent and the US was strongly needed (EC, 2010), (Ewijk and Baud, 2009, p. 218). Building up friendships, promoting peace, cultural and sporting exchange, international understanding and reconciliation of the different nations were the main goals of twinning then (Ewijk and Baud, 2009, p. 218), (Villiers, 2006, pp. 2–3), (Hoetjes, 2009, pp. 157–159). Examples of some of the first links were partnerships closed between cities in the UK and Germany such as Bristol/Hanover or Oxford/Bonn (Villiers, 2006, p. 2). These first attempts of co-operation between war-participating countries had long-lasting consequences. According to the European Commission, “...[these twinning initiatives] were one of the most visible and lasting ways of bringing people from different countries together under the European banner” (EC, 2010a) and can be therefore seen as one of the first steps of European integration (EC, 2010a), (Villiers, 2006, p. 3), (CEMR, 2008a). Even until today, C2C linkages are used within the EU for drawing the different nations and cultures nearer to each other and for other political reasons (EC, 2010a), (Hoetjes, 2009, p. 159). Nonetheless, those first C2C partnerships were oftentimes limited to town halls and to an exclusive circle of politicians only, who met on a regular basis to deepen personal linkages and to facilitate cultural and sporting exchange. Many of the links closed during that period have become inactive over time (UNDP, 2000).

City Partnerships during the 1960s, 70s, 80s and 90s (Second to Sixth Layer)

During the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, the mechanisms of town twinning became of different importance to the world. Due to changes in economy, culture and politics, twinning between industrialized countries in Europe and North America became less and less popular. The primary reasons for twinning, which led to the conclusion of partnership agreements after WWII, were mainly out of use and many different objectives such as community development, which were not covered by C2C partnerships yet, attracted the attention of cities more and more (CEMR, 2008b), (UNDP, 2000), (Villiers et al., 2007, pp. 1–2). Although the period between the 1960s–2000 was characterized by many different waves of city partnership closings, which resulted from different objectives, but still overlapped in time, five main layers for city partnerships could be observed. Figure 7 illustrates those waves of city partnership closures starting from WWII (CEMR, 2008b), (UNDP, 2000), (Hoetjes, 2009, pp. 158–159).

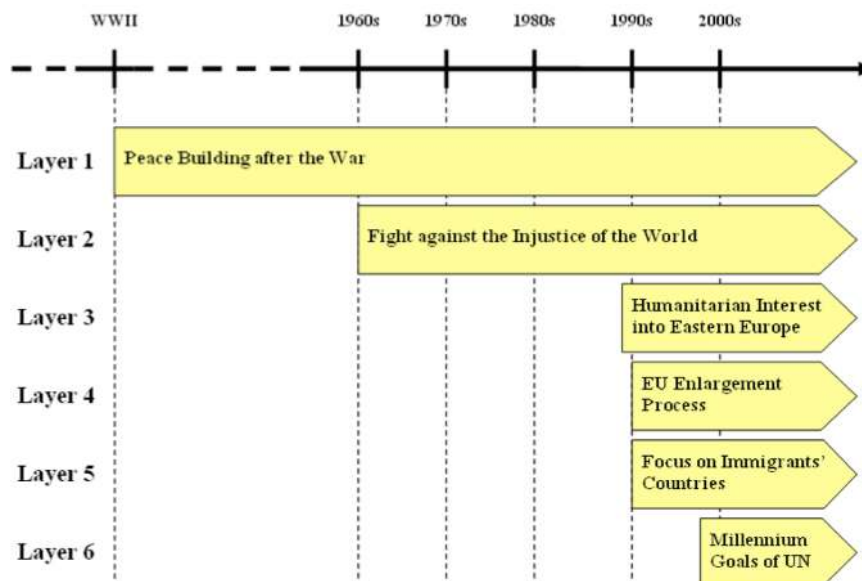


Figure 6: The Evolution of City Partnerships since WWII
Adapted from Hoetjes, 2009, pp. 158–159

Hoetjes (2009) concluded that after the first layer, which was driven by peace building after WWII, the desire to fight the injustice of the world system in favor of third world countries dominated partnership agendas in the 1960s (second layer). This was followed by a humanitarian interest into Eastern European countries after the fall of the Berlin wall leading to the conclusion of partnership agreements with cities located in that area (third layer). Both of those waves or layers were driven by civil society mainly and not by municipalities. Also in the 1990s, cities interested into C2C networking drew attention on Central and Eastern European countries because of the EU enlargement process (fourth layer). Furthermore, during the same time, cities started to establish contacts with municipalities, where their immigrants originated from (fifth layer) (Hoetjes, 2009, pp. 158–159). Besides the humanitarian and ideological reasons for closing C2C partnerships, it is also due to successful intervention by the UN that more and more city partnerships during the 1990s were not only set up between cities in industrialized countries anymore, but also with cities located in South America, Africa or Asia. These C2C networks are usually called North-South linkages in current literature, which refers to the fact that one sister city is located in one of the well-developed nations on the Northern hemisphere, whereas the other part is situated in developing countries in South America, Africa or Asia (UNDP, 2000), (Villiers, 2006, pp. 3–4), (Ewijk and Baud, 2009, p. 218), (Keiner and Kim, 2007, p. 1372). This trend is reflected in Hoetjes' sixth and last layer or wave, which, in his opinion, was mainly stipulated by the Millennium Campaign for Sustainable Development, which encourages municipalities to engage in C2C networking in order to achieve the UN Millennium Goals (Hoetjes, 2009, pp. 158–159). Buis (2009) summarized the motives for those layers. In his opinion there are three – the idealistic motive of peace and helping the poor, the political motive of supporting liberal movements or building opposition, and the economical motives of business opportunities, trade and investment.

In conclusion, it can be said that these six layers can be seen as the most important reasons why European and North American countries started to rethink their twinning strategies. Based upon those layers, further partnerships were usually closed after careful consideration only and for reasons, which might result into achieving practical results and long-lasting local development (CEMR, 2008b), (UNDP, 2000), (Hoetjes, 2009, p. 162). During the last years, C2C partnerships have become popular once again (Habitat International, 2009, p. 131). The reasons for this and the status quo of C2C links at the time being are described throughout the next chapter.

4.5 Status Quo and Trends of City Partnerships

Today, the concept of partner cities “...[is] a global phenomenon, which encompasses friendship, solidarity, culture, awareness-building, international understanding, humanitarian assistance, sustainable development and...good governance” (UNDP, 2000). This status is a consequence of almost 70 years of twinning initiatives, which were signed because of the aforementioned reasons and which are still valid. Therefore, city partnerships can be seen as a very complex political phenomenon, which has not lost its attractiveness throughout the years. The following chapter focuses on the status quo and trends, which can be observed in connection with town twinning. The global aspects of C2C links are mentioned, and the European twinning situation is examined in more detail as well. After this, the question of what partnership agreements look like nowadays is answered.



The Global Perspective of City Partnerships

To start with, C2C partnerships are a global phenomenon today. According to the United Cities and Local Governments [UCLG], about 70 percent of the world's cities and towns participate in some kind of international C2C co-operation programme, which amounts to about 15,000 to 20,000 towns in total (UCLG, 2010, p. 13), (Villiers et al., 2007, p. 1), (Tjandradewi et al., 2006, p. 358). Especially throughout the last years, C2C links attracted the attention of local, national and supranational policy makers once more, who recognized the potential of C2C co-operations for poverty reduction, institutional strengthening, democracy and peace building, and knowledge exchange. The concept of "global citizenship" and the adoption of the UN Millennium Development Goals contributed to the importance of C2C partnerships as well (Habitat International, 2009, p. 131).

However, the UNDP (2000) highlights that, despite this focus on problems which mainly concern developing countries, C2C co-operations between industrialized and developing countries are still rare – i.e. the majority of existing links is still connecting northern, developed countries. Many European cities are a good example for this paradox, among them is also the City of Graz (Austria). The city has concluded 16 partnership agreements, nine of them with cities located in countries of the EU and another five with cities of other European countries. Only two partnerships include cities outside of Europe, Zababdeh located in the Palestinian National Authority and Montclair in the US (City of Graz, 2010). It can be observed that especially European cities tend to mainly establish links with neighboring or cross-border cities (Hoetjes, 2009, p. 161). For this reason, the following paragraphs give some more information about the current twinning situation within Europe.

City Partnerships in Europe

Having a closer look on city partnerships in Europe, it can be noticed that only in Europe and between European countries, there have been about 34,000 listed twinning initiatives until now. The following exhibit, which was retrieved from CEMR's official website, shows the number of twinning initiatives per European country. Keeping in mind that CEMR only tracks European twinning initiatives, the numbers in Figure 8 show partnerships among European countries only; i.e. there is at least for each link one partner in another European country. Thus, the total number of twinning links in Europe and among European countries is estimated to be about 17,000 (CEMR, 2008a)

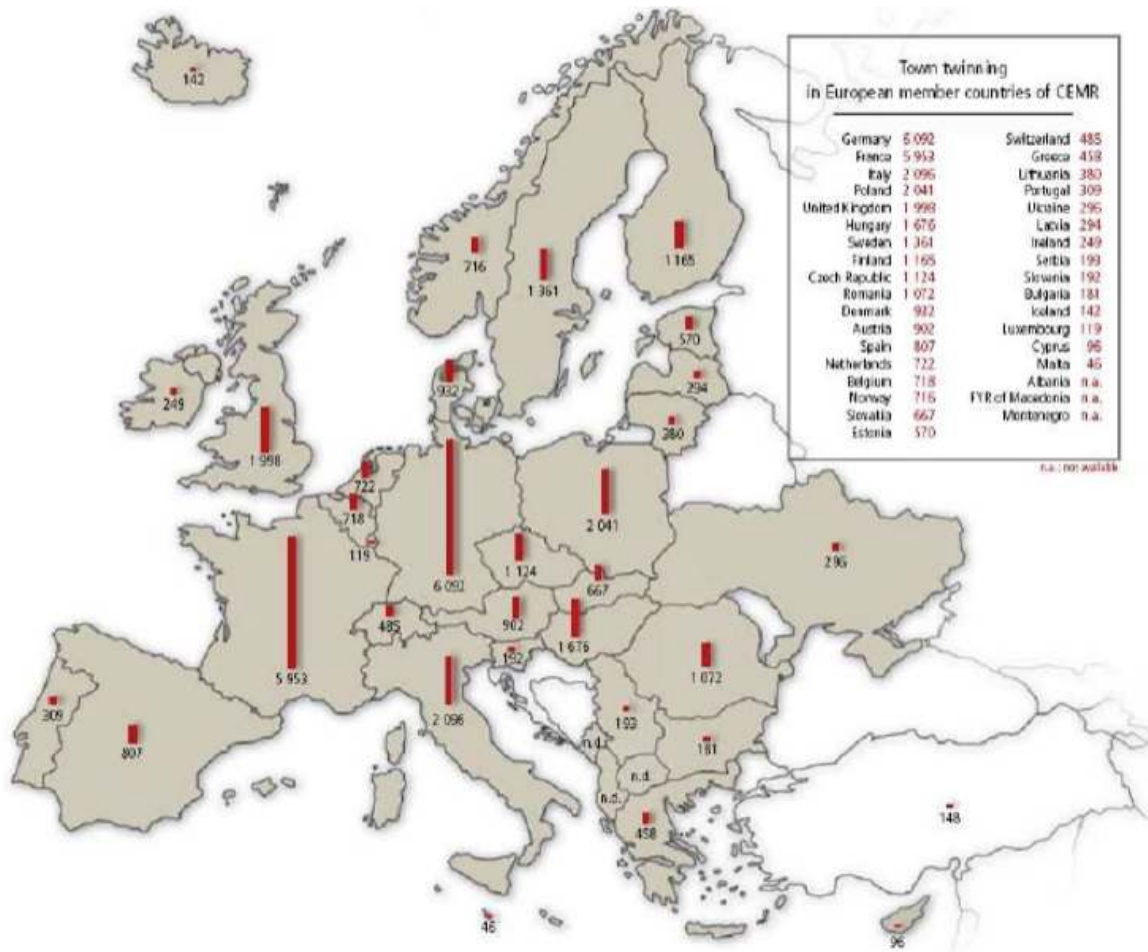


Figure 7: Town Twinning in Europe
 Picture retrieved from CEMR, 2008a

As it can be seen above, Germany and France are the most active town twinningers among European countries. Both of them have around 6,000 twinning initiatives with other European countries and about 2,220 with each other. Other countries with a high number of twinning links are Italy, Poland, the UK, Hungary, Sweden, Finland, the Czech Republic and Romania with about 1,000 to 2,000 twinning partners. Austrian cities have 902 official linkages altogether (CEMR, 2008a).

Although the number of twinning links that currently exist is that high, it seems that no city partnership around the globe is like another. Partnerships vary in terms of participating parties, objectives, resources and many more, leading to the fact that the possible combination out of those factors seems to be unlimited. Nevertheless, there are still lots of similarities between partnership agreements, which can be categorized. The following chapter is focusing on that.

4.6 City Partnerships – Towards a Classification

Keeping in mind that city partnerships tend to be unique agreements between one or more parties, C2C links still have similarities with each other. This chapter therefore focuses on the content of C2C agreements and how such partnerships might be classified. In particular, a framework for classifying city partnerships is developed and the different categories of this classification are introduced to the reader.

Developing the Framework

Thinking about the similarities between city partnership agreements in general, it can be said that all contract partners have to reach an agreement over the same issues, namely *Who are the parties involved? What are the goals and objectives of the partnership? What is the timeframe for the partnership? Who else shall/can participate in the partnership? Who else is supporting the partnership and how?* (UN-Habitat & WACLAC, 2003, p. 11). For facilitating reasons, these questions can be used to form categories for C2C partnerships, which could be used for classifying existing C2C (project) partnership agreements on their part. Table 2 summarizes those questions once again and illustrates how the questions could be transformed into categories.

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	General Question	Sub-Question	Category	Dimensions within the Category
C2C Agreement	<i>Who are the parties involved?</i>	Where are the partner cities located?	Geographical Scope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North-South - North-North - South-South - West-East - Global
		How is the partnership structured?/How many cities participate?	Co-operation Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One-on-One - Groups
	<i>What is the timeframe for the partnership?</i>	Is there a timeframe?	Duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No specified ending (partnership agreement) - Specified ending (project partnership agreement)
	<i>Who else shall/can participate in the partnership?</i>	Which internal and external participants are involved into the partnership?	Active Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local authorities - NGOs - Private sector - Academic, research - National associations of local authorities
	<i>Who else is supporting the partnership and how?</i>	Where does the support come from?/In which form does the support come?/Why do the partner cities receive external support?	External Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Type of external support - Geographic focus - Funding and resources - Facilitating institutions
	<i>What are the goals and objectives of the partnership?</i>	-	Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - social - cultural - economic - technological - environmental issues

Table 2: Classification of C2C Links
 Adapted from UN-Habitat & WACLAC, 2003, p. 11

As it can be seen above, every C2C link can be classified according to six categories. The categories are the geographical scope of the C2C agreement, the co-operation structure, the duration of the partnership, the objectives, the participants actively involved into the partnership and external supporters. The first category, the geographical scope of a partnership agreement, refers to the geographical location of the partners. It can be either North-South, North-North, South-South, West-East or global. C2C links can have two forms of co-operation structures, namely a one-on-one form or a group structure. Furthermore, active participants involved into the partnership can be local authorities, NGOs, individuals and companies from the private sector, academics, researchers, or national associations of local authorities. Next, external support has got several sub categories, which involve the type of external support, the geographic focus of the support, funding and resources, and the facilitating institutions. Finally, objectives tend to differ widely. The most commonly used are focused on social, cultural, economic, technological or environmental issues (UN-Habitat & WACLAC, 2003, p. 11). The different categories are described throughout the following paragraphs in more detail.

Geographical Scope

Starting with the geographical scope, links can be categorized by using the city's geographical location. Partnership agreements can be either North-North, North-South, South-South, West-East or global linkages. This classification is used in many academic articles and other publications regarding city partnerships as well. In this case, a North-North linkage means that both partners are located in well-developed countries in the north, e.g. the partnership agreement between Graz (Austria) and Darmstadt (Germany) is a North-North link (UNDP, 2000), (UN-Habitat & WACLAC, 2003, p. 8), (City of Graz, 2010). A North-South linkage refers to the fact that one sister city is located in one of the well-developed nations on the northern hemisphere, whereas the other part is situated in developing countries in South America, Africa or Asia (UNDP, 2000), (UN-Habitat & WACLAC, 2003, p. 8). Hewitt (1999) is evaluating such a North-South link. In his case it is Toronto (Canada) and Sao Paulo (Brazil). Accordingly, a South-South partnership is a partnership between cities located on the southern hemisphere and a West-East link is an agreement between a well-developed city on the western part of the northern hemisphere and a town on the eastern part of the northern hemisphere such as Eastern Europe or the Middle East (UNDP, 2000), (UN-Habitat & WACLAC, 2003, p. 8). Having a look at Graz's partner cities, it can be noticed that most of the agreements can be categorized as North-North linkages while only a few, such as the project partnership agreement with Zababdeh which is located in the Palestinian National Authority, are North-East based (City of Graz, 2010).

Co-operation Structure

The co-operation structure between the partners is another point, which distinguishes city partnerships from each other. The structure can be either one-on-one or a group structure, meaning that the city partnership or project partnership agreement can involve only two cities or a group of cities. At this point, it has to be noted that city partnerships, which are formed by a group of cities, are not equal to city networks, which were described in sub-chapter 4.3 'Terminology' (UN-Habitat & WACLAC, 2003, p. 8). All of Graz's partner links, except the one with Darmstadt and Trondheim, are examples for a one-on-one structure, which means that the city has closed agreements with only one city at a time – every link, except with the two cities mentioned before, is verified in an own agreement.

Active Participants

Furthermore, active participants can also vary from partnership to partnership. Possible actors besides the parties who sign the partnership agreement, can be local authorities, NGOs, people or companies from the private sector, academics and researchers, and/or national associations of local authorities (UNDP, 2000), (UN-Habitat & WACLAC, 2003, p. 8). The City of Graz determined several possible participants in its internationalization strategy (City of Graz 2006). Accordingly, possible partners might be the 'Internationalisierungszentrum Steiermark (ICS)', the universities and universities of applied sciences, the province of Styria, as well as the diplomatic missions of the respective countries or regions (City of Graz, 2006, pp. 1–6).



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External Support


Although projects, which are based on a C2C co-operation agreement, are in the sole responsibility of the contract partners, there are several national, international and private organizations which might support the partners in the achievement of their goals. Examples are national/international NGOs such as Sister Cities International, national governments, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the World Bank, the EU, professional organizations and many more. These institutions can support the project partners in different ways without being in the position to influence the (project) partnership agreement itself. Possible supportive measures by those institutions are strategic capital investments, training and human resource development, consulting in various fields etc. Financial support could come in the form of grants, loans or the allocation of individual budgets. Additionally, many organizations have projects with special geographic focus, for example for Latin America or North Africa. The Phare Programme provides a practical example in this context (UNDP, 2000), (UN-Habitat & WACLAC, 2003, p. 8), (EC, 2010b), (Andreasson and Königson, 2009, p. 1–2). According to Bontenbal (2009), external support by such organizations is especially important for small and medium-sized municipalities, which are oftentimes limited in their financial resources, whereas large cities are able to come up with budgets for international co-operations on their own (Hoetjes, 2009, pp. 160–161). Johnson and Wilson (2009) examined the case of two partnerships between cities located in the UK and Uganda, one of them was mainly funded by the World Bank (Johnson and Wilson, 2009, p. 211). At this point, it seems to be necessary to refer to the sub-chapter “External Institutions Interested into City Partnerships”, which also includes some remarks on the aforementioned Phare Programme.

Objectives


Last but not least, the partnership’s objectives are another important point, which has to be discussed by the partner cities and which might be used for classifying existing partnership agreements. Regarding objectives, it has to be said that according to the partner cities’ location and the period in which the partnership agreement was concluded, objectives tend to differ widely. It seems that many city partnerships, especially among North-North partners, have less stringent objectives like goodwill or friendship, whereas others, usually North-South linkages, are based on very specific goals and timeframes (UNDP, 2000). Focusing on the first group of partnerships, which were mainly set up in the post-war era until the 1980s, it seems that today, those contacts are mainly used for cultural, sportive and educational purposes. Examples could be invitations for festivals, exhibitions and competitions, or exchange programmes for students, certain occupational groups or others. For the latter group, which mainly includes partnerships closed throughout the last decades, the most common objectives are related to community development and the assistance cities can give to each other in various other areas. Those might refer to meeting basic needs, awareness-raising, municipal capacity-building, matters of governance, strengthening local democratic institutions and furthering wider community participation in every aspect of city life (UNDP, 2000), (Hewitt, 1999, pp. 27–28), (Villiers et al., 2007, p. 2), (Buis, 2009, pp. 190–194). As those are some of the most popular objectives used for newly closed C2C co-operations, they shall be described briefly hereafter.

Meeting Basic Needs. Firstly, in terms of meeting basic needs, the improvement of living conditions connected with the development of basic urban services such as health care for poor people is one of the most vital aspects tackled in international C2C co-operation – especially in North-South partnerships (Bontenbal and Lindert, 2008, pp. 465–467). However, this objective is seen to be quite controversial as it was observed that large international NGOs are able to cover the same topics in an oftentimes more professional way than it is possible for city administrations (Nitschke et al., 2009, p. 138). Volunteer involvement in international co-operations might be decreased therefore, as it seems to be more efficient to engage professionals for doing the same job (Hoetjes, 2009, p. 162).

Awareness-Raising. Next another, oftentimes underestimated factor is awareness-raising. Awareness-raising takes place when people work together closely over a longer period of time. Getting more and more involved with the other parties’ problems and way of thinking, urban and private actors involved into the twinning initiative start to build up cultural understanding. Pointing out the fact that many town twinning agreements were closed between cities with constant migration flows, cultural understanding built during town twinning projects can be used to facilitate the integration of these migrants into the own community (Ewijk and Baud, 2009, p. 219), (Hewitt, 1999, p. 30), (Lindert, 2009, pp. 173–174). Lindert (2009) notes that awareness-raising is also linked to fund-raising in many cases and is therefore the aim of many partnerships as well.

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Municipal Capacity-Building, Matters of Governance, Strengthening Local Democratic Institutions and Furthering wider Community Participation. Lastly, municipal capacity-building, matters of governance, strengthening local democratic institutions and furthering wider community participation in every aspect of city life are strongly interrelated with each other. Municipal capacity-building means building up and developing local urban administrations – a precondition for everyday life in urban areas. This objective is especially popular with countries which had to face a major political swift in recent years, for example former Soviet nations, which transformed from Communist ruling to democracy (Bontenbal, 2009a, pp. 181–182), (Bontenbal, 2009b, pp. 100–101), (Bontenbal and Lindert, 2008, p. 467), (Lindert, 2009, p. 173). According to Abrahamsen (2004), one of the greatest challenges of municipal capacity-building is to avoid exporting (northern) administration structures or plans. It is the task of the more developed partner to assist the less developed city administration in developing their own structure, which shall respond to the city's individual challenges, instead of providing a developed solution. Next, objectives related to matters of governance are mainly popular with North-South linkages and good governance can help to increase the quality of live in urban areas and to decrease poverty (Bontenbal and Lindert, 2008, pp. 465–467), (Bontenbal, 2009b, p. 100–101). Furthermore, furthering wider community participation in every aspect of life is another objective which can be tackled by C2C co-operations. On the one side, the partner, who is in need of more community participation, can be supported in efficiently responding to its citizens' needs and in encouraging them to contribute actively to the city's management. Thus, people learn that everybody can contribute his or her part to improve the society. Furthermore, it can be said that decisions, which influence the people's life a lot, should only be made after the people's opinion is considered as well. On the other side, the partner, who is giving the assistance to the one who is in need of more community participation, gets the chance to involve its citizens actively in the partnership initiative in order to create awareness locally and to foster the idea of global citizenship (Bontenbal, 2009a, p. 182), (Bontenbal and Lindert, 2008, p. 469–470).

To sum it up briefly, although C2C partnerships are unique agreements between two or more parties, it is still possible to identify similarities between such international links. Those can be observed in particular when having a look at the geographical scope of the agreement, the co-operation structure, the duration of the partnership, active participants involved, external support and objectives, as every city partnership agreement usually focuses on those areas. As it was already mentioned before, city partnerships are not only supported by the parties, who signed the agreement, but might also attract the attention of others, mainly supranational organizations. The most important ones are introduced throughout the next chapter.

4.7 External Institutions Interested into City Partnerships

According to the UNDP (2000), city partnerships are determined by the partner cities solely. However, there are numerous national and international organizations who support and/or influence partnerships as well. This support can come in the form of financial assistance, training, consulting and others – usually combined with rules and regulations (UN-Habitat & WACLAC, 2003, p. 8). Some of the most important organizations and institutions are for example the UNDP, the European Commission, or People to People International and Sister Cities International. All of them are described briefly at this point.

UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is a UN organization responsible for supporting countries in finding solutions for global and national development challenges. Advocating the UN member states, developing strategies and monitoring their progress are the core areas of the organization. The UNDP focuses on the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals. Special attention is paid to the areas of local capacity, democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, environment and energy, HIV/AIDS, and the empowerment of women. The UNDP uses networks and connects countries for knowledge, experience and resource exchanges. Town twinning was named by the organization as one important tool in order to achieve those goals and is therefore supported by the organization (UNDP, 2010), (Nitschke et al., 2009, p. 136).

European Commission

For countries within the EU, town twinning is supported by various EU programmes. Among them are for example the ‘Europe for Citizens programme’, which is part of the union’s Citizens’ Policy, or the Phare programme which is focused on the Union’s enlargement process. Both of those programmes will be described shortly at this point to give an idea how town twinning can be integrated into large scale programmes.

Europe for Citizens Programme. To start with, the current Europe for Citizens programme is open for all EU members and Croatia for the period 2007 to 2013, following the programme of period 2004 to 2006. Further potential candidates for this EU initiative include Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo (EC, 2009, pp. 4–5), (EC, 2009, pp. 19–20). The Europe for Citizens programme seeks to encourage European citizens to be actively involved into the process of European integration, to develop a common sense of European identity and to enhance mutual understanding. Besides participatory citizen’s projects, town twinning is explicitly named as a tool to achieve these goals. Town twinning projects, which show a commitment to European integration, which build friendships and which promote active participation among citizens, are granted with EU funds. In 2003 for example, 1,328 out of 2,136 projects were selected for the programme with most of them taking place in France (347), Germany (338), and Italy (175) (EC, 2010).

Phare Programme. On the other side, the Phare programme is focused on the Union’s enlargement process and the preparation of candidate and potential candidate countries for membership in the EU. For the time being, candidate countries are Croatia, Iceland, Macedonia, Montenegro and Turkey. Potential candidate countries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia. Projects covered by Phare include institutional and capacity-building in the candidate countries. This shall ensure that the candidate countries can adapt to the Union’s *acquis communautaire* (The *acquis communautaire* is the body of common rights and obligations in the European Union). Twinning initiatives are one of the programme’s main instruments to meet these objectives (EC, 2010b), (European Parliament, 4 December 1998), (Dixelius/Haglund, 2003, pp. 3–4).

People to People International and Sister Cities International

People to People International (PTPI) and Sister Cities International (SCI) are both US non-profit organizations, which want to promote peace through creating and strengthening partnerships between citizens of US and international communities. Going back on Eisenhower’s citizen diplomacy initiative, mutual understanding, peace and co-operation among people and communities are the goals of the two organizations. Whereas PTPI is focused on connecting individuals, SCI is concentrating on cities, counties and states (SCI, 2010), (PTPI, 2011).

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These organizations are some of the most prominent supporters of twinning initiatives at the time being. However, there are many more. After this general introduction to city partnerships, its historical evolution, the status quo, city partnership agreements and organizations supporting C2C initiatives, the following chapter summarizes concluding remarks on the topic of city partnerships by focusing on key findings made by cities engaged into city partnerships.

4.8 Findings Regarding City Partnerships in the Literature

Besides many official publications from organizations such as the UN and the EU, which primarily focus on development issues, city networks, projects and financial support, current literature about city partnerships is oftentimes analyzing and evaluating existing partnerships and projects. Some of the most important findings out of those papers are introduced at this point in order to conclude the theoretical introduction to city partnerships. These lessons learned by different European municipalities give an idea of what a city has to take care of when dealing with city partnerships. In particular, the following paragraphs discuss the issues of prerequisites for successful city partnerships, mutuality and equal distribution of power, and selecting objectives and working on projects. Furthermore, a model developed by Villiers (2009) regarding the formation and management of C2C partnerships is introduced.

Prerequisites for Successful City Partnerships

According to various authors, the prerequisites for successful C2C partnerships and C2C partnership projects are, on the one hand, enough resources and, on the other hand, dedication of the parties involved.

Resources. In the case of city partnerships, current literature implies that necessary resources for networking activities are not only money, but also time, staff and expertise. In terms of money, Nitschke et al. (2009) highlight that municipalities are oftentimes not able to support their partner cities to a full extent as the legal security and the financial support by the government does not allow for it. Furthermore, they say that limited financial resources and structural changes in municipalities diminish the dedication to support other communities (Nitschke et al., 2009, p. 135). This is also supported by Bontenbal (2009b), who notes that especially small and medium-sized municipalities are limited in their efforts. Additionally, she also mentions that “clear political mandate for international co-operation, the human capacity available [...] and the extent of additional external funding” are the key factors for twinning in a northern partner town. For the south, she argues that an international co-operation department has to be in place, which is able to facilitate, promote and sustain international contacts (Bontenbal, 2009b, p. 103). Besides financial aspects, high staff turnover in projects is also a challenge (Tjandradewi et al., 2006, p. 372). Thus, it can be said that more resources might also lead to better outcomes (Wallberg, 2000, p. 27), (Nitschke et al., 2009, p. 137), (Hewitt, 1999, p. 42). Additionally, Ewijk and Baud (2009) mention the importance of the resources’ perceived usefulness in order to increase the potential for mutual learning, co-operation and successful projects (Ewijk/Baud, 2009, p. 220), and Tjandradewi (2009) highlights community-wide participation (Tjandradewi et al., 2006, p. 360), (Tjandradewi/Marcotullio, 2009, p. 168).

Dedication. Dedication is another key factor for successful C2C initiatives. Johnson and Wilson (2009) give a good example, which combines the problem of limited financial resources and dedicated project partners. In their article “Learning and mutuality in municipal partnerships and beyond: A focus on northern partners”, they examine amongst others the partnership between Iganga in Uganda and Daventry in the UK. The partnership project between the two cities ended in 2000 because of financial reasons. However, afterwards the “Daventry Friends of Iganga” NGO was founded by engaged officers, politicians and other members of the community in order to work on projects with and for Iganga in their spare time (Johnson/Wilson, 2009, p. 211), (Hoetjes, 2009, p. 161). Dedication is also related to mutual understanding. Parties, who have developed mutual understanding, are able to better understand their counterparts and to partly overcome other inequalities such as cultural differences. Thus, the parties are more willing to invest time and resources into the project and the co-operation is more likely to succeed. This is also supported by Buis (2009), who argues that understanding each other, each other’s circumstances and challenges together with high political commitment on both sides establish the most important prerequisite for success in C2C partnerships. Bontenbal (2009b) concludes that mutual understanding can be oftentimes traced back to the fact that partners had to face the same situations or share other characteristics with each other. Therefore, C2C partnership projects are seen to be more successful in general when the parties have common problems or share other things with each other (Bontenbal, 2009b, p. 105), (Wallberg, 2009, p. 9), (Hewitt, 1999, p. 31), (Hosaka, 1993, p. 135), (Tjandradewi et al., 2006, pp. 361–362). This is also supported by the UNDP, which suggests that mutual understanding and reciprocity are preconditions for successful C2C co-operations (Ewijk/Baud, 2009, p. 220), (Tjandradewi/Marcotullio, 2009, p. 168), (Tjandradewi et al., 2006, p. 360). In this context, Ewijk/Baud (2009) mention that partnerships focusing on migrant countries have advantages over other north-south links. However, although similarities between the partners are good for mutual understanding, differences are important for learning opportunities as well (Johnson/Wilson, 2009, p. 212), (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009, p. 204). Villiers et al. (2007), who tried to validate observed success factors of city partnerships through empirical testing, also came to the conclusion that partner commitment, understanding, cultural sensitivity, positive partner attitude, and similarities of personalities on both sides have a significant positive impact on the success of partnerships (Villiers et al., 2007, pp. 9–10).

Mutuality and Equal Distribution of Powers

One aspect, which is heavily criticized throughout existing literature, is the fact that C2C partnerships still lack mutuality and equal distribution of powers, especially when it comes to north-south partnerships. The northern partner usually retains the power because of money, expertise and information, whereas the southern partner is oftentimes forced to accept what the northern partner is dictating. Thus, it can be said that the north is usually the donor whereas the south is the recipient in what they call a partnership (Bontenbal, 2009b, p. 105), (Abrahamsen, 2004, p. 1454), (Bontenbal and Lindert, 2008, p. 479), (Ewijk and Baud, 2009, p. 220), (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009, p. 207), (Hewitt, 1999, p. 42). Although there are already tendencies that the less developed partner is heavily integrated into the project development phase, much has to be done yet (Abrahamsen, 2004, p. 1459), (Hosaka, 1993, p. 133). This problem of unequal distribution of powers is that significant because projects, which were developed only by one party, are more likely to fail. According to the World Bank, which was cited in Abrahamsen (2004), this is especially true when it comes to policy and institutional reforms as those should not be imported or imposed, but must be home grown. Therefore, Johnson and Wilson (2009) suggest that this inequality in distribution of powers should be replaced by new relationships and engagement on both sides. Thus, also conflicts between the two partners could be reduced (Bontenbal and Lindert, 2008, pp. 379–380). Furthermore, mutuality implies that information sharing must not be a one way flow from north to south, but should involve both parties. According to Ewijk and Baud (2009) and Devers-Kanoglu (2009), there are several learning possibilities for more developed partners as well. Among them is for example gaining information about innovations in less developed governances (Ewijk and Baud, 2009, p. 221), (Devers-Kanoglu, 2009, p. 202). Buis (2009) concludes that open discussion of motives, joint analysis of problems, joint steps in implementation, joint review of progress, and joint monitoring and evaluation are necessary for successful partnerships.

Selecting Objectives and Working on Projects

Next, the question of which objectives to choose and how to work on projects is another issue, which was already discussed by various researchers. In general, it can be said that it seems that some objectives are better for co-operations between certain cities than others (Tjandradewi and Marcotullio, 2009, p. 168). Municipalities are often more willing to work on projects in areas with which they are familiar with. To give an example, Andreasson and Königson (2003) examined Swedish twinning initiatives aimed at improving living conditions for the urban poor in slums of developing countries. They noted that only six out of the 33 projects, which they evaluated in their paper, were slum-related, the rest focused on other issues. They concluded that the reason for this could have been that Swedish municipalities have no practical experiences with slum-related problems and were therefore also not able to share relevant knowledge about it. In their case, the general focus on improving living conditions for the urban poor has therefore been shifted towards other objectives, which were more familiar to Swedish municipalities (Andreasson and Königson, 2003, p. 1). Accordingly, it can be said that it might make more sense if the twinning co-operation's objectives are selected by the parties who are directly involved into the project as objectives, which are set by external partners or only one party, are sometimes out of touch with reality. This is also true for financial issues. More precisely, budgets or funds allocated by external institutions, which oftentimes come hand in hand with external regulations regarding the length of a project or others, might not fit to the situation and the twinning partnership at hand. Another problem is established by definitions that are made by such external partners. The terms *achievement* and *development* might be mistaken by one or more parties involved into the twinning initiative – purpose and results of the partnership have to be clear to both sides (Buis, 2009, p. 192), (Wallberg, 2000, pp. 2–4), (Lindert, 2009, p. 173). Furthermore, projects and objectives, which were set by only one twinning partner – usually in the north, are also more likely to fail. The reason for this is that those projects are sometimes not targeted on what really has to be done in the partner municipalities (Nitschke et al., 2009, p. 139). The northern partner should keep clearly in mind that southern municipalities have their own expectations and ideas about what has to be done (Bontenbal, 2009b, p. 103). Additionally, it has to be mentioned that Villiers et al. (2007) proved empirically that partnerships are more likely to succeed where projects are based on a business plan as well as extensive communication and where the management of the partnership is of high quality (Villiers et al., 2007, pp. 9–10), (Villiers, 2009, p. 150). Buis (2009) mentioned regular contact as a success factor as well.

As those lessons learned seem to be relevant, the most important issues of this chapter are summarized in the following table.

<p>Prerequisites for Successful City Partnerships</p>	<p>Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Money, staff and expertise <p>Dedication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Of all parties involved - Compensates lack of resources to a certain extent - Mutual understanding
<p>Mutuality and Equal Distribution of Powers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donor vs. recipient of money, expertise and information – has to be avoided - Mutual project development leads to better results and less conflicts - Two-way flow of information
<p>Selecting Objectives and Working on Projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Choose familiar topics - Objectives and financial issues have to be developed by the partner cities and not dictated by one party - Regular contact and extensive communication - Having a plan and good management of that plan

Table 3: Findings Regarding City Partnerships Retrieved from Current Literature

In addition to those learnings, Villiers (2009) has developed a conceptual framework of city-to-city partnership formation and management, which is described in the following text.

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Villiers' Conceptual Framework of C2C Partnership Formation and Management

The following figure, which was developed by Villiers (2009), illustrates six steps for effective formation and management of C2C partnerships, namely (1) strategize, (2) identify, (3) evaluate, (4) negotiate, (5) implement and learn, and (6) alliance capability.

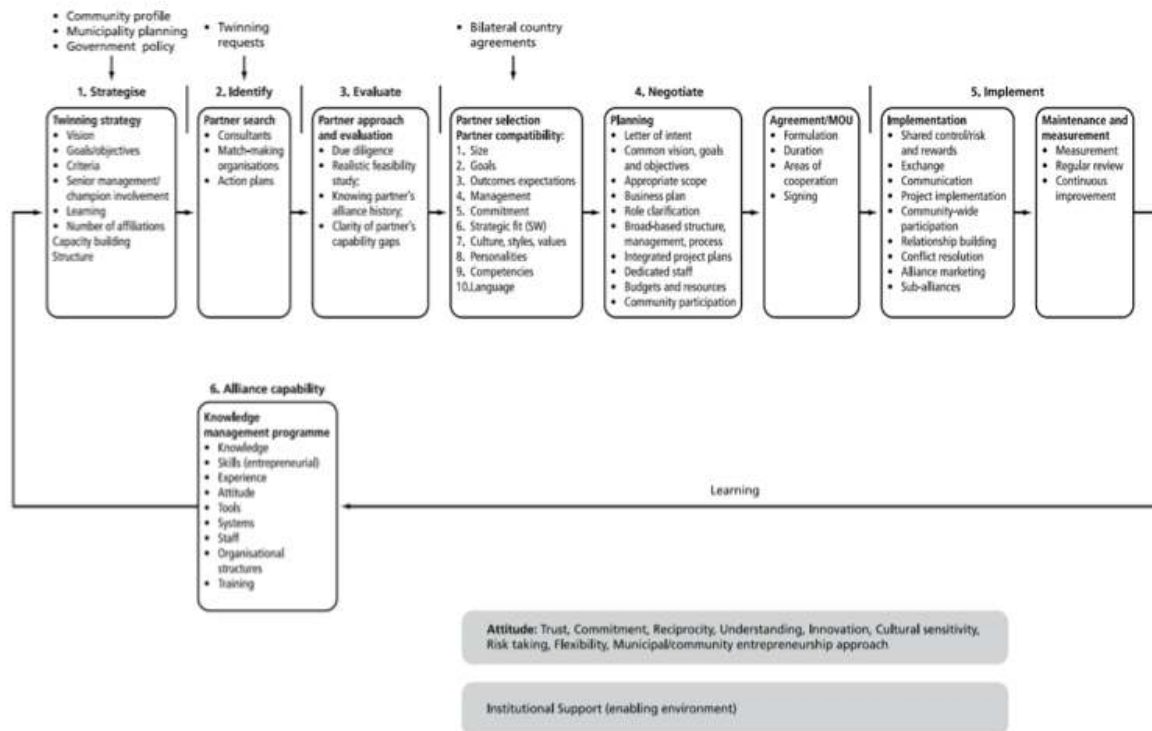


Figure 8: A Conceptual Framework of C2C Partnership Formation and Management
 Picture retrieved from Villiers, 2009, p. 151

Step 1 'Strategize' suggests that every city, which wants to be connected to other cities via partnership agreements, needs to formulate a general alliance strategy first of all (i.e. an internationalization strategy) and determine criteria for partner selection. Then, step 2 'Identify' can follow, which refers to looking for possible partner cities that meet the criteria determined throughout the alliance strategy. Furthermore, those cities have to be evaluated (step 3 'Evaluate'), and preferred partners selected (step 4a 'Negotiate'). This is followed by a negotiation phase and the signing of an agreement (step 4b and step 4c 'Negotiate'). Afterwards, step 5 'Implementation' starts. This phase includes the co-operations between the partners (step 5a), and further the maintenance and measurement of the relationship (step 5b). In the end, the city should learn from that process and develop alliance capability through experience, which might influence the city's alliance management in future. Thus, this framework can be seen as an ongoing cycle (Villiers, 2009, pp. 151–154).

Altogether it can be said that those lessons learned by different municipalities, which were located in European countries mainly, provide insights on avoiding and/or solving problems related to city partnership activities.

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