

Title: Governing the networked city: an inquiry into how and why European cities cooperate with each other.

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Over the past three decades, European local governments have transcended traditional administrative boundaries by forming 'City Networks' with other cities. These collaborative platforms function within the stratified European multi-level governance system, fostering policy sharing, idea exchange and political interest groups. This research critically examines the escalating trend of European cities engaging in this innovative mode of intercity collaboration, seeking to decode the primary forces propelling such cooperation.

Adopting a 'nested research design,' the investigation unfolds in two distinct yet interconnected phases. Initially, it delves into the intricacies of Barcelona and Milan as case studies, aiming to unearth the underlying causal mechanisms of city network participation. The study then scales its inquiry through a quantitative analysis of a broader array of municipalities members of 'Eurocities'—the preeminent network of European cities. This approach empirically validates the hypotheses and insights derived from the initial qualitative exploration.

The thesis stands to make significant empirical and theoretical contributions. It introduces a novel typology for dissecting intercity cooperation and proposes an innovative analytical framework, potentially enriching the discourse on trans-local governance dynamics within Europe.