ESRC/UACES Study Group on the Europeanisation of British Politics and Policy-Making

Sheffield, 23 April 2004

EUROPEANISATION AT THE URBAN LEVEL: LOCAL ACTORS, INSTITUTIONS AND THE DYNAMICS OF MULTI-LEVEL INTERACTION

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ABSTRACT

Involvement in EU-sponsored programmes has provided urban institutions and actors across Europe with unprecedented access to new sources of information, legitimacy, and not least, financial support. From established local authorities to fledgling neighbourhood partnerships, actors across the urban spectrum see increased European involvement as a central component of innovative governance.

This paper seeks to evaluate whether European working has provoked shifts in the institutionalised norms, beliefs, and values held by participants in governance at the city level, focusing in particular on the experience of British cities. In order to do so, the paper elaborates a four-part framework for Europeanisation at the urban level, and subsequently applies this framework to the empirical cases of Birmingham and Glasgow. It then attempts to draw some preliminary conclusions about how involvement in EU Structural Fund programmes affects embedded norms and practices in cities across the continent.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of Europeanisation today occupies an important space in the study of European integration and comparative politics, and has served to reinvigorate debate about the impact of the EU on governance at and below the level of the nation-state. There is an ever-growing body of theoretical debate and empirical evidence which suggests that, indeed, "Europeanisation matters. In nearly every case, Europeanisation has led to distinct and identifiable changes in the domestic institutional structures of member-states" (Risse, Green Cowles and Caporaso 2001: 1). However, can the models developed to analyse the phenomenon of Europeanisation be applied at multiple territorial levels? Are the theoretical underpinnings of the relatively new Europeanisation research agenda mature enough to explain or predict subtle forms of domestic institutional change? This paper argues that, thanks to the unique role played by cities in both territorial and political hierarchies, it is critical to articulate and test a framework for the evaluation of the phenomenon of Europeanisation at the urban level.

In cities, Europeanisation results from intensified political and economic interaction between actors at every conceivable territorial level. Access to the European Structural Funds exposes a diverse array of local actors to EU institutions and norms such as programming, partnership and stringent accounting procedures, often for the first time. Similarly, participation in trans-national organisations and networks enables individual cities to make their presence felt at EU level. Even supposedly symbolic arrangements, such as twinning and cultural exchange, foster changes in the behaviour of urban actors vis-à-vis the European Union. These diverse points of contact between the European and urban territorial systems show that local-level Europeanisation is not an easily definable or reducible phenomenon, nor can it merely be subsumed into broader discussion on regional Europeanisation. In short, urban and metropolitan-level Europeanisation requires an analytical paradigm that enables researchers to test the salience of EU influences on local institutions and actors.

This paper seeks to develop our understanding of the process of urban Europeanisation, focusing specifically on the experience of two British cities. Evidence from Birmingham and Glasgow suggests that there is a distinct, two-way process of Europeanisation occurring at the urban level, driven primarily by the availability of large

quantities of EU Structural Funding – the instrument whereby EU 'adaptational pressures' are brought to bear on urban institutions and actors. The selection of two cities which have benefited from Structural Funding will allow us to test the assertion that a strong positive correlation exists between the presence of EU financial assistance and the magnitude of Europeanisation in urban areas.

First, the paper consecrates two sections to explain why it is important to evaluate Europeanisation at the urban level, and develops a framework that allows researchers to study the phenomenon's effect in cities. Second, the paper examines four types of Europeanisation in Birmingham and Glasgow, simultaneously revealing that it is critical to differentiate between *regional* adaptation, one of the chief themes of the evolving Europeanisation research agenda, and the more subtle types of adjustment occurring within cities and metropolitan sub-regions. Finally, the paper draws several preliminary conclusions about the ways in which Europeanisation affects embedded norms and practices in cities benefiting from EU Structural Funds programmes. As plans for a wider and deeper European Union progress, interaction between local actors and Brussels will become increasingly dynamic – rendering urban-level Europeanisation an ever-stronger influence on local affairs.

2.   WHY ISOLATE EUROPEANISATION AT THE URBAN LEVEL?

The phenomenon of Europeanisation has previously been studied at both national and regional territorial levels, suggesting that there are different types of adaptational pressures and mediating institutions operating within different tiers of governance. This assertion rests in large part on arguments emanating from the 'New Regionalist' school, which posits that the territorial framework of society is presently being de-constructed and rebuilt in unprecedented ways. Michael Keating, for example, argues that the emergence of stronger sub-national identities in recent years has promoted a 'reterritorialisation' of European space (Keating 1997, 2001). Referring specifically to the urban level, Keating states that

> …city-regions are becoming more heterogeneous, multi-cultural and pluralist. New demands are being placed on the political agenda, from strategies of economic development, through environmental concerns, to issues of social justice and identity politics. Yet the policy options available to city-regions as political systems are constrained by the external competitive environment. Here lies the dilemma of contemporary urban and regional politics (Keating 2001: 387).

Thus, the internal *and* external constraints that urban areas face are unique, and cannot simply be compared to the pressures experienced by constitutional regions, rural areas or small towns.

Numerous observers, including sociologists, planners and political scientists, emphasise the distinctiveness of cities vis-à-vis other territorial levels of governance and organisation (Harding 1997; Heidenreich 1998; Smith 1998). Neil Brenner cogently notes that European geography has become "a highly uneven mosaic of relatively distinctive urban-regional economic spaces" (1999: 445), a comment echoed by European Commissioner for Regional Policy Michel Barnier, who stated that cities must serve as "*points d'appui pour une politique de rééquilibrage du territoire communautaire*" (Speech, Lille, 2 November 2000). Similarly, Le Galès and Harding (1998) see today's European city as a 'player' no longer overwhelmed by the state, while Le Galès (2002) consecrates a large portion of his most recent book to the augmented role of the city in an ever-more complex and fragmented system of European governance. Commentators and scholars across the fields of political science, geography, planning and economics all agree that urban governance has specific characteristics that distinguish it from the broader study of sub-national politics.

Thanks to the unique nature of urban governance, I argue that it is critical to isolate the phenomenon of Europeanisation in cities from sub-national Europeanisation in more general terms. The highly specific opportunities and constraints which shape urban institutions and actor behaviour mean that existing models for the assessment of Europeanisation at the sub-national level cannot simply be applied to cities without modification. By developing and testing an analytical framework for urban-level Europeanisation, the following sections seek to provide a generalisable but context-sensitive 'tool-kit' that allows researchers to predict and explain how pressures for Europeanisation affect local and neighbourhood-level actors across the EU.

3.   'URBAN EUROPEANISATION' – A NEW ANALYTICAL PARADIGM

In recent years, a huge quantity of research focused on the role of sub-national governments in European affairs has indicated the existence of a process of Europeanisation within the nation-state (Bache *et al* 1996; Bomberg and Peterson 1996, 1998; Goldsmith and Klausen 1997; Goldsmith and Sperling 1997; John 1996a, 1996b, 1998, 2000, 2001; A Smith

1998; R Smith 1999).   However, the concept of domestic-level Europeanisation "lacks a paradigmatic consistency," and is often employed as an explanatory factor for changes in institutional structures or actor behaviour without careful elaboration (Olsen 2000, 2001; Harmsen and Wilson 2000). How, then, can the very general concept of 'Europeanisation as domestic adaptation' be made more relevant to the urban context?

Whereas some authors, such as Benz and Eberlein (1999) have defined the *challenge* that Europeanisation poses to cities and local actors, it is necessary to define the term itself in order to understand its impact at the urban level.   Peter John, for example, calls Europeanisation

> …a process whereby European ideas and practices transfer to the core of local decision-making as well as from local policy-making arenas to the supranational level. The European function is a means whereby public authorities can innovate and initiate policies and programmes in the context of trans-national co-operation and European policy-making (John 2001: 73).

According to this definition, Europeanisation at the local level has both 'download' and 'upload' components, and goes beyond Benz and Eberlein's narrowly-tailored focus on the 'download' of EU regional and structural policies. In addition to the exogenous influences exercised by the European Commission and other supra-national bodies on local government, there is also a mechanism whereby local innovations – such as best practice in physical regeneration or social inclusion – can be assimilated into EU policy frameworks over time.

In order to assess the impact of Europeanisation at the urban level, a critical observer can examine the policies, practices and preferences affected by interaction with the EU (Bache 2003). However, in order to account for the unique political networks dominating territorial politics at the urban level, it is necessary to add a fourth category – participants. EU-financed programmes, largely because of their requirements for long-term partnership working, force the expansion of the number of players at the local decision-making table, bringing non-governmental organisations, representatives from the community and voluntary sectors, business leaders, and other social partners into the increasingly complex world of urban governance (Marshall 2003a, 2003b; Bache 2000; A Smith 1998; Le Galès 2002). These new participants often play a crucial role in urban governance, and their EU-mandated

presence alongside established local actors catalyses bottom-up pressure for institutional change over time.

Taking the definitions and analytical tools discussed above as a starting point, it is possible to articulate a working definition of Europeanisation at the urban level which can be applied to any European city engaging with political initiatives and pressures from the European level:

1) *'Download Europeanisation': Changes in policies, practices, preferences or participants within local systems of governance, arising from the negotiation and implementation of EU programmes.* [1]

2) *'Upload Europeanisation': The transfer of innovative urban practices to the supranational arena, resulting in the incorporation of local initiatives in pan-European policies or programmes.*

Whereas scholars of Europeanisation at the national level often focus principally on 'upload' (Bomberg and Peterson 2000), or the myriad examples of 'download' from European to domestic political systems (see, *inter alia,* Bulmer and Burch 2000; Hix and Goetz 2001), I shall attempt to address both processes with specific reference to examples drawn from the cities of Birmingham and Glasgow. The 'European turn' experienced by urban institutions and actors is a unique process which can only be examined by combining elements of the Europeanisation approach with a nuanced understanding of urban governance, local dynamics, and domestic contextual factors.

It is crucial to address the foundational assumptions which underpin the definition elaborated above. First, and foremost, urban-level Europeanisation is inextricably linked to the new institutionalist school in comparative politics (March and Olsen 1989, 1998; Steinmo and Thelen 1992; Hall and Taylor 1996; Bulmer 1994, 1995; Lowndes 2001, 2002; Harmsen 2000). As Green Cowles *et al* note, "domestic institutions represent long-standing habits of doing things. In this sense, the possibilities for institutional change are path-dependent" (2001: 3). Thus, within all European cities, one must account for the presence of 'mediating institutions' at multiple territorial levels, as these attenuate processes of Europeanisation and

ensure that unique and long-standing patterns of local governance are not subsumed into a single, reductionist paradigm. Building on a model articulated by Green Cowles *et al* (2001), I argue that urban engagement with EU policies results in a four-stage pattern of interaction and adjustment:

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Europeanisation (Structural Fund/Community Initiatives/Urban Pilot Projects) →
    Adaptational Pressures ('degree of fit' between EU/domestic norms) →
        Mediating Institutions (local, regional, national institutional context) →
            Urban Structural Change (institutional shifts / governance change)

Adapted from Green Cowles *et al* (2001).

In Britain, for example, 'mis-fit' (Börzel and Risse 2000; Radaelli 2000; Green Cowles *et al* 2001) between the cohesion-oriented principles of EU policies and the competition-based urban policy pursued by central government[2] since the 1980s ensured that adaptational pressures arose in cities where domestic and European regeneration initiatives existed side-by-side. Using the definition of urban-level Europeanisation articulated above, it is possible to examine the types of structural change wrought by this 'mis-fit' despite the strength of extant institutional norms throughout the hierarchy of territorial governance.

The networked governance paradigm, advanced most eloquently by Rod Rhodes (1997), represents the second pillar underpinning the concept of city-level Europeanisation. As cities across Britain and Europe undergo an inexorable shift from hierarchical government to a more horizontal and flexible form of governance (see, *inter alia,* Stoker 1999), diverse actor networks and resource dependencies begin to characterise urban politics and especially the management of regeneration initiatives. Europeanisation, far from reducing local fragmentation, actually serves to accentuate it, prompting the development of more urban partnerships, widening the number of participants involved in decision-making and

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[1] I am indebted to Ian Bache for a recent definition of Europeanisation, "changes in preferences and/or practices within the domestic arena arising from EU membership" (2002: 10), which I have adapted here.
[2] See, *inter alia*, Leach and Percy-Smith (2001); Stoker (1999); Stewart (2000).

encouraging greater multi-level territorial interaction. Thus the Europeanised city is, invariably, also a networked city, as the examples below will show.

Four varieties of Europeanisation can be analysed in cities that interact with EU Structural Fund policies and EU institutions:

- Europeanisation of local government (*download*);
- Europeanisation of non-statutory actors involved in processes of urban renewal and governance (*download*);
- Europeanisation of local regeneration partnerships and networks (*download*);
- Europeanisation that engenders dissemination of local practices to other cities via trans-national networks and EU institutions (*upload*).

By 'significant involvement', I refer principally to participation in EU Structural Fund programmes, the URBAN Community Initiative, and Urban Pilot Projects, all of which require detailed long-term interaction with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Regional Policy (DG REGIO). It would be distinctly more difficult to investigate and subsequently analyse processes of Europeanisation in wealthier cities such as London, Paris or Milan, where inconsistent (or non-existent) involvement with EU programmes renders urban actors and institutions far less likely to face the sort of adaptational pressures seen in beneficiary cities like Liverpool, Lille, Berlin or Cardiff. The potential for policy transfer (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996; Evans and Davies 1999) between European and urban levels exists principally in those cities which face the daily challenge of supra-national interaction with Brussels officialdom.

Birmingham and Glasgow, with their long histories of European activism and Objective 2 Structural Fund involvement, are thus ideal case studies for an examination of Europeanisation at the urban level. The empirical research upon which this short investigation is based was carried out between December 2000 and December 2002, and involved a broad array of semi-structured interviews, close reading of primary source documentation from European, national and local sources, and extensive literature review.

4.   URBAN EUROPEANISATION IN BRITAIN: INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

In the cities of the United Kingdom, Europeanisation takes place against a backdrop of severe domestic institutional constraints. As Radaelli notes, these constraints cannot simply be dismissed, since "the analysis of the effects of European public policy on national policy systems should be conducted in parallel to the investigation of endogenous processes" (2000: 22). Unlike many of their continental counterparts, British local authorities lack constitutional standing, possess relatively few competences, and are subject to a restrictive *ultra vires* rule which prevents them from taking action outside those responsibilities expressly granted to them by the UK Parliament. Although considered the most powerful British local governments by virtue of their population size and relative importance to the national economy, urban authorities across the United Kingdom have watched their influence decrease as quangos and private firms have taken over many aspects of policy implementation and service delivery over the past twenty years (Skelcher 1998; Davies 1996; Stewart and Stoker 1995). Cities watched helplessly as successive central governments used their power to reform sub-national government repeatedly in 1975, 1986 and 1995. These reforms first created, and then eliminated, upper-tier metropolitan authorities that had significant strategic planning and economic development functions. As a result, central cities were cut off from their suburban hinterlands and forced to develop narrower policies for everything from economic regeneration to European engagement. At the same time, central government reduced the global financial allocation to urban local authorities for regeneration and renewal, forcing cities to compete with each other for a share of an ever-dwindling resource pie (Bailey 1995; Harding *et al* 1994). The old redistributive Urban Programme became a competitive Single Regeneration Budget, and local councils had to contribute match-funding to regeneration schemes above and beyond their own capabilities (Pierre 1998). Additionally, public-private partnerships became the principal vehicles for regeneration, although the type of partnership envisaged by Thatcherite planners was driven solely by economic considerations rather than the holistic, social motives underpinning EU Structural Fund partnerships (Oatley 1998).

The perilous financial state and political independence of British cities has been further complicated since the enthronement of New Labour in 1997. A slew of central government initiatives, most emanating from the Prime Minister's Social Exclusion and

Neighbourhood Renewal Units[3], have continually moved the goalposts and criteria for urban regeneration programmes, confusing local actors that depend on central government funding in order to carry out neighbourhood and city-wide regeneration initiatives (Leach and Percy-Smith 2001; Hill 2000; Stewart 2000). The financial 'squeeze' is not the only one with which local authorities have had to contend, however; devolution in Scotland and Wales, coupled with an on-going and asymmetrical plan for top-down regionalisation in England, have forced urban governments nationwide to share many of their competences with new meso-level institutions (Bogdanor 1999; Keating 2001). In summary, urban governments and local actors across the United Kingdom have to contend with the difficulties of domestic institutional flux while simultaneously reacting to European programmes as well.

The constantly shifting institutional tableau surrounding urban governance has had a profound impact on the way in which city councils and actors approach the European Union. Urban local authorities and their non-statutory partners are stretched to the limit; pressures for Europeanisation thus face a broad array of 'mediating institutions' at the national level which militate against large-scale deviation from domestic norms. British local authorities have repeatedly looked to the European Commission as a sort of counter to Whitehall, lobbying for Commission intervention in order to ensure that the principles of partnership, programming, concentration, subsidiarity, and especially additionality are respected (McAleavey and Mitchell 1994; McAleavey 1995; Dardanelli 1999). UK central government efforts to undercut additionality in the 1980s and 1990s actually prompted greater activism by local authorities; thus, central government efforts to retain absolute control of Structural Funding *encouraged* rather than constrained Europeanisation at the local level. Birmingham and Glasgow, for example, consistently lobbied the Commission for greater local input during the agenda-setting, negotiation, implementation and evaluation phases of EU programmes as a counter to central government's gatekeeping.

Despite the fact that many urban authorities in the UK have looked to the European Union for support in their battle for greater subsidiarity and locally-designed regeneration programmes, "…the Commission can only go so far in shaping central-local relations in the UK. While it can create networks and encourage others, involve a wide range of actors, and participate itself, the Commission can do little to shift the long-standing power dependencies

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[3] Now housed in ODPM, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

between central and local government" (Bache *et al* 1996: 317). This is undeniably true. Institutional constraints and the power of central government notwithstanding, it is equally difficult to disagree with the conclusion that "the effect of EU directives and finance was to precipitate a growing Europeanisation of UK sub-national government" over time (John 1996b: 133). Financial 'gate-keeper' or not (Bache 1998), Whitehall has not stopped European norms such as partnership and strategic planning from becoming central to the work programme of urban actors in Britain despite its best efforts to retain a strangle-hold on interaction with Brussels.[4] While these EU principles are certainly adapted to the distinct national context into which they are inserted – such as the traditionally strong role of UK central government vis-à-vis local actors – they nonetheless provoke changes in urban governance that are likely to endure long after European Structural Funding ceases.

5. DOWNLOAD EUROPEANISATION: THE IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Change within local authorities

The first category of 'download' Europeanisation occurs within the formal institutions of local government. In both Birmingham and Glasgow, local authorities adjusted to European norms of direct lobbying, partnership working and long-term strategic programming in order to benefit from the 'carrot' of Structural Funding. Birmingham City Council (BCC) was one of the first local authorities to mobilise in Europe, opening its first representative office in Brussels in 1984 and using EU leverage to secure an Integrated Development Operation for regeneration as early as 1985 (Martin and Pearce 1992; Martin 1998). Glasgow, operating in tandem with the powerful Strathclyde Regional Council (SRC)[5], followed in 1985 and expanded its involvement thanks to activism on the part of SRC leader Charles Gray in ensuing years. Local authorities in both cities established units dedicated exclusively to European working, ensuring continuous flows of information between Brussels and city fathers while simultaneously developing a crucial lobbying function for regeneration programmes. As a result, the two conurbations secured the largest

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[4] See, amongst others, Tewdwr-Jones and McNeill (2000); Heinelt and Stack (1999).

[5] The regional authority from 1975-1996. Glasgow District Council existed during this period as a lower-tier unit, but the majority of European working took place at regional (SRC) level. When the regional councils were disbanded in 1996, both European competences and personnel transferred to the new unitary Glasgow City Council. For more, see McAteer (1997) and Colwell and McLaren (1999).

packages of EU Structural Funding in England and Scotland respectively during both the 1994-1999 and 2000-2006 programming periods.

During the past decade, European working has been mainstreamed within both BCC and Glasgow City Council (GCC). BCC's European and International Division bids for and administers Structural Fund projects, liases with other regional actors in the West Midlands, and actively engages with regional and multi-level networks in order to promote economic development and continued European interest in the city. GCC has incorporated European personnel and resources into an integrated department of Development and Regeneration Services, creating a 'one stop shop' for regeneration projects that links European, municipal and domestic renewal projects together within a single, cohesive strategic plan. These departments go far beyond the simple administration of Structural Funding; instead, they reflect the internalisation of the European Commission's principle of programming, which favours holistic and strategic approaches to regeneration and economic development (CEC 1997b, 1998). Downward adaptational pressures have thus brought about internal change within urban councils, despite the existence of significant domestic institutional constraints on local authority actors at European level. As a prominent Birmingham politician intimated,

> I would argue that Birmingham's European linkage is not simply one of drawing down funding. Instead, it's very much more a process of moving from a parochial city to becoming a city which sees itself in a European league of cities. We talk about our competitiveness and our future in European terms…. (interview, 24 October 2002).

This re-visioning has been accomplished in Birmingham and Glasgow through the vehicle of the EU Structural Funds – which serve, in effect, as the delivery vehicle for adaptational pressures and as a catalyst for significant institutional adjustment within urban local authorities.

Europeanisation's role in increasing urban-regional interdependencies in Britain

Birmingham and Glasgow, like many other cities, lie at the heart of larger metropolitan regions, where their sheer size relative to suburban authorities has led to a great deal of mutual distrust. Regional management of successive Structural Fund initiatives – a bedrock requirement of European Commission regulations – has, however, served to lessen intra-metropolitan rivalries and has assisted in the development of regional governance perspectives. European programmes have pressured previously parochial urban authorities

into adopting a regional perspective for the purposes of regeneration, economic development and planning. While UK urban authorities do not engage in European high politics, unlike sub-national authorities in some other member states, "more important for UK local government is the part they have played in shaping regional plans, such that they have become recognised as true if not equal partners in the policy implementation and management processes at the regional level" (R Smith 1999: 166).

This statement is borne out by evidence from our two case cities, where the strategic capacity of local authorities appears to have increased as European ideas on partnership and programming were 'downloaded'. As one practitioner remarked, "the European element has <u>forced</u> regional identity development. Look at the fact that the Birmingham City Council leader is President of the Committee of the Regions" (Local Government International Bureau interviewee, 21 June 2002). The European links pioneered by BCC in the 1980s and early 1990s have now matured into a broader regional partnership exemplified by the creation of a joint West Midlands in Europe office and a locally-based West Midlands European and International Forum, which collaborate with the regional Structural Fund partnership on issues related to regeneration and strategic planning. Similarly, Strathclyde Regional Council's EU-level efforts allowed Glasgow and neighbouring authorities to build the unique, 300-member Strathclyde European Partnership (SEP) and the flexible West of Scotland European Consortium (WoSEC) where common regional positions on European issues are developed. These institutions have developed despite the abolition of regional government in greater Glasgow, indicating the influence of the EU ideal of meso-level partnership on metropolitan governance. As one regeneration professional in the city noted,

> There's almost a sense in which the European programme is filling a vacuum in terms of economic development for a regional consciousness… the role of the Strathclyde partnership is to say that, you may be undermining something happening somewhere else. It allows an awareness that will hopefully impact on what's done to make sure you get maximum effect (interviewee, SEP, 25 February 2002).

Similar sentiments were forthcoming in Birmingham, where the construction of a regional consciousness around the 'engine' of the central city has been assisted by ongoing Europeanisation: "Birmingham now operates not as a city, but as a city-region. In an economic strategy sense, we have moved from a city to a regional perspective" (interviewee, BCC, 24 October 2002). European adaptational pressures have thus forced urban councils to

adopt more strategic and partnership-based methods of working, despite the existence of the Whitehall 'gate-keeper' and continuing domestic institutional flux.

6.   DOWNLOAD   EUROPEANISATION: NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND LOCAL ACTORS

Non-governmental organisations, operating at both community and metropolitan level, have also adjusted their approach to regeneration in response to EU initiatives. The experience of bidding for European Social Fund monies, coupled with extensive participation in both regional Programme Monitoring Committees, lent a new prominence to groups such as the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council and the Glasgow Council for the Voluntary Sector. The requirements of the Structural Funds greatly enhanced the decision-making role of grass-roots organisations in both project planning and implementation. In the words of one interviewee, "the Structural Funds have transformed the face of Birmingham. The social partners have realised this too…   There's a lot of networking between all these different organisations. Time and again you meet people with two, three, four, five different hats linked to European activity" (interviewee, West Midlands in Europe, 29 May 2002). Driven by Birmingham's vocal third sector, community actors from across the region established the West Midlands European Network and Regional Action West Midlands to express the will of the community and voluntary sectors in European and domestic issues, respectively. A one-time top BCC civil servant interviewee commented that

> Absolutely, there is a ratchet effect. That level of investment has increased the pluralism, the number of voluntary organisations, in Birmingham – this is partly down to Structural Funds input. The security of some of these bodies has also been helped by Structural Funds money. And it's produced a bigger generation of people used to working in such organisations (interview, 25 June 2002).

In Glasgow, meanwhile, non-governmental actors today account for approximately half of the membership of the Strathclyde European Partnership, and play a significant role in the project selection and implementation stages of EU-funded and domestic urban regeneration projects (SEP 2001).

The Europeanisation of NGOs has not, however, been limited to third sector participation in city- and region-wide structures. Even at the neighbourhood level, community groups have become linked into multi-level EU networks which hand out

financial assistance in return for adherence to the principles of partnership and strategic programming. The URBAN Community Initiative – which operated in North Glasgow and in Birmingham's Sparkbrook area between 1997-1999 – is one such example. Although small in budgetary terms, these programmes prompted substantial engagement on the part of community organisations which previously had no political or financial links beyond local government level. "There is a kind of institutional culture that is overwhelming," noted one interviewee, but "in the long term, however, things are shifting in favour of the social partners…. (interviewee, West Midlands in Europe, 29 May 2002). Thus at both metropolitan and neighbourhood level, the 'download' of European norms of partnership has facilitated more consensus-based working and forms of participatory governance that spur on the transition from urban *government* to *governance*.

7.   DOWNLOAD   EUROPEANISATION: LOCAL   REGENERATION PARTNERSHIPS

The increasing participation of non-governmental actors in European initiatives has proceeded hand in hand with the development of a wide array of local regeneration partnerships in both Birmingham and Glasgow. Although targeted partnership initiatives have existed in both cities since the mid-1970s, in response to economic crisis, their organisation prior to the arrival of European funding and norms was quite different. Whereas Birmingham historically favoured public-private initiatives, focused principally on the construction of 'flagship' city-centre venues (Loftman and Nevin 1998), endogenous models of partnership in greater Glasgow focused more extensively on social inclusion and employment needs in the city's most deprived areas (Pacione 1995). Fifteen years' eligibility for European Structural Funding, however, has caused actors in both city-regions to adjust their partnership structures to ensure their consistency with the vision promoted by the European Commission. In the city of Glasgow, this process entailed the mainstreaming of European, national and local visions of partnership into a single over-arching concept known as the Glasgow Alliance. Itself a broad, consensus-based partnership, the Alliance charts strategic policy and facilitates access to funding and decision-making for its constituent partnership areas. "One of the greatest legacies and impacts of the [EU] partnership model" in Glasgow, noted one programme manager, "is that as a result of the West of Scotland Objective 2 programme, the local economic development companies have sprung up and become a significant force… the community approach has showed people a direction, a way

that they can work together to create a lasting benefit…" (interviewee, SEP, 25 February 2002).

Without the Structural Funds as a project catalyst and enabler, most Glasgow and Birmingham local regeneration companies would never have become fixtures of the urban institutional landscape. As a former BCC Chief Executive remarked, EU assistance "will probably leave a widely distributed and enhanced understanding of what works and doesn't work, drawing partners together – in sum, the skills of coalition-building" at the micro level (interview, 25 June 2002). There is a significant degree of optimism that urban regeneration partnerships, although started with EU funding, have become broadly institutionalised: "They have built in structures and partnerships that will live on, operating with the local authorities and the NGOs" noted an LGIB interviewee, who insisted that: "the small community groups are doing the best work – the local authority is saying they have a commitment to these groups, and will divert the money there" (21 June 2002). While these partnerships continue to reflect the embedded institutional characteristics of their respective cities, they also display a commitment to joint working, capacity-building and holistic thinking that is less evident in non-beneficiary cities across Britain. Whereas most British urban partnerships seem to operate to the hymn sheet prepared by central government, those drawing down funding from the European Union display a more strategic approach, reflecting their higher degree of Europeanisation. In effect, involvement with the Structural Funds has prompted many British urban partnerships to think 'outside the box' to bring scarce resources together in order to provoke community business development, employment, innovative social projects and physical regeneration.

8.   UPLOAD EUROPEANISATION: NETWORKS AND EU INSTITUTIONS

Successive Structural Fund programmes in Birmingham and Glasgow have also been accompanied by significant 'upload' Europeanisation. As acknowledged by local political leaders and regeneration practitioners, actors in both cities have been keen to feed their experiences back to supra-national bodies in order to fine-tune European economic development and regeneration programmes. As one interviewee at Scottish Enterprise Glasgow remarked, "We're not doing it just for funding purposes – best practices and learning are also very important. We must swap information in order to develop Glasgow as a European city and build a higher, more complete identity. Hence our willingness to submit

to an OECD external critique" (interview, 1 March 2002). Birmingham, meanwhile, uses its position as a founder member and key contributor to the EUROCITIES network in order to disseminate information about its regeneration successes and failures. Through its leading role in the West Midlands in Europe lobbying partnership, and the fact that the leader of the City Council is also President of the Committee of the Regions, Birmingham's civic leaders have developed a wide array of channels to ensure the 'upload' of their views and practices to the supra-national level.

Crucially, both cities are now actively working to share their extensive European experience with their counterparts in the accession states through trans-national networks and the financial resources provided by the INTERREG and PHARE Community Initiatives. Glasgow, via the Strathclyde European Partnership, has developed strong links with regions in Poland and Hungary, providing training to local authority and NGO personnel involved in regeneration, partnership formation, and local capacity-building (SEP 2001). The city's urban renewal innovations have been so widely admired that Glasgow is now the subject of an extensive OECD 'Urban Renaissance' report, which serves as a vehicle for the 'upload' of the city's regeneration model (OECD 2003). Birmingham and the West Midlands conurbation are also involved in Eastern Europe, and have developed a high profile in the Council of Europe's Congress of European Municipalities and Regions in order to disseminate their own experiences and preferences vis-à-vis regeneration and partnership creation. As one local government observer noted, "we know that we can't just say we want this or that from Brussels... we need to build national and cross-national alliances... we've done a lot of background work which could develop the arguments" (interviewee, West Midlands Local Government Association, 24 October 2002). Although this perspective has taken time to build, it today drives urban and regional actors in UK beneficiary cities to pursue a more visible profile at European level, as there is an increasing recognition that policy preferences can be 'uploaded' via on-going EU programmes and initiatives.

9.   EARLY CONCLUSIONS: EUROPEANISATION AT THE URBAN LEVEL

This short article has developed a framework for the analysis of Europeanisation at the urban level, and has tested that framework on two British cities which have histories of involvement with EU institutions and regional policy programmes. Clear processes of 'download' and 'upload' Europeanisation were identified in both Birmingham and Glasgow,

where both entrenched local government structures and less-stable micro-level actors were affected by the adaptational pressures that arose from EU Structural Fund programmes. Unlike existing analytical paradigms, the novel framework for urban-level Europeanisation articulated at the start of this paper proved useful to understanding actor behaviour and the dynamics of multi-level interaction within the extremely complicated British urban system.

While the empirical analysis above captured the salience of Europeanisation in the two city-regions, it also showed that adaptational pressures catalysed by EU policies have *not* single-handedly provoked large-scale urban governance change. Although European-urban interaction certainly shifted modes of working at the urban level and enabled local actors to articulate positions independent of other tiers of territorial governance, these value shifts seemed largely *confined to European working*. The research cited here shows that there has been only a limited amount of 'spill-over' into domestic urban regeneration programmes, which continue to operate according to the path-dependent institutional norms and priorities dictated by the nation-state (see also Marshall 2003a). Differences between European and national understandings of urban governance and regeneration policy, especially in less *communautaire* countries like the United Kingdom, will increase in political significance in the not-too-distant future – especially since the EU is likely to gain additional power over aspects of environmental protection and urban affairs.

Although the empirical material presented above concentrated on British city-regions, the analytical model used to explore and explain urban Europeanisation in Birmingham and Glasgow is generalisable. The framework articulated above can easily be used to examine the degree of 'fit' between existing institutions and EU requirements in other European urban areas, provided that the cities selected satisfy the criterion of 'significant involvement' with EU programmes and institutions. Processes of download and upload Europeanisation, catalysed by adaptational pressures from above and mediated by existing institutions at the domestic level, are by no means limited to the cities of the British Isles alone. Similarly, the theoretical framework upon which the concept of 'urban Europeanisation' is predicated includes concepts such as new institutionalism and network governance, which have been deployed to explain and predict sub-national political behaviour across Europe. As adaptational pressures from the European Union build in cities across the continent, 'urban Europeanisation' represents a salient driver for change from Budapest to Berlin to Bristol and

beyond – and therefore must be accorded the same level of academic attention as the study of Europeanisation at other territorial levels.

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