

**Katja Schucknecht**

**(PhD, University of Chemnitz; Germany)**

*The Positioning of East Central European Cities in the Context of European Cohesion*

In my presentation, I would like to illustrate an excerpt of my PhD project, the title of which being “The Positioning of East Central European Cities in the Context of European Cohesion: Methodological Potential and Limitations of a Secondary Analysis of Official Statistics”.

By developments like the postsocialist transformation, the joining of the European Union and globalizing processes, the eastern central European cities are integrated into an extended European city system, in which they need to gain certain positions. Because of their possession of developmental potentials but also obstacles the cities' chances differ. This fact also has implications on the social structures of the cities resp. the social inequality between the cities, because globalizing and europeanization processes lead to social structures that are not exclusively limited by national borders.

The aim of my work is first to study the (mainly economic caused) positions of the eastern central European cities and then to look at their social structures. To achieve that, I developed a battery of both economic and social indicators from sociological theories but also economic theories of spatial developments. An important source for example was Manuel Castells' “Rise of the Network society”, out of which I conclude, that not only firms, but also regions and cities are increasingly linked with each other. Another central concept is that of Global Cities, which can deliver indicators for my own analysis, too. Finally, theories that reflect dependencies between regions are taken into account. For gathering the social dimensions and indicators, I describe the current debate about the Europeanisation of social inequality and Reinhard Kreckel's Theory of social inequality and his centre-periphery-metaphor, which is very productive for this topic. Elements of other theorists like Ulrich Beck are also considered.

The analysis of the Polish, Czech, Slovak and Hungarian cities is carried out on the basis of Urban Audit data, which are collected by Eurostat. Within the stock of data I could find a lot of the evolved indicators, while others – especially those referring to links between cities – Urban Audit cannot deliver. Therefore, to analyze those indicators, possibly the search for further sources has to be taken into consideration.

With regard to my current state of work, the comparison of my theoretically evolved indicators and the Urban-Audit-Data is completed. The next step is to develop a detailed method of treating the data (factorial analysis, cluster analysis). After that, the analysis of the about 52 cities can start. Until September, I hope to be able to present first findings of my research.