

The Europeanization of G4 and G40 Cities in the Netherlands



Student:
Student number
Master Program
First Reader (supervisor)
Second Reader
Date of completion
Word Count

Joeri van den Ende
487359
Management of Governance Networks
Prof. Jurian Edelenbos
Dr. Astrid Molenveld
August 28 2018
26.894

Executive Summary

Cities are in the limelight of discussions about their policy-making influence at the moment. Whereas these new incentives to redesign the European Union towards a more decentralized and city-centered system are good developments in themselves, it appears to be a significant challenge for cities to effectively deal with this expanding role. The growing range of opportunities available for cities to deal with European activities in one way or another is placing a considerable burden on cities who have little to no experience with European activities in their own organization. Currently, the expectation that comes along with this new role for cities is that they will automatically 'see the light' to become motivated and engaged with European policy-making and programs. The complexity of this challenge is therein often ignored.

Apparently, there is still a lot of uncertainty about what drives cities to become active in European activities in the first place. To obtain a better understanding how Europeanization works in a concrete context, this inquiry zoomed in on the Netherlands. More concretely, the largest cities in the Netherlands, in the form of two city networks – the G4 and G40 – have been investigated. The Netherlands is so interesting as a case as the Dutch system is highly decentralized, allowing cities to have a lot of maneuvering space and freedom to act according to their own interests. The forthcoming research question is: *what is the level of Europeanization of Dutch G4 and G40 cities?* This main question is divided in two sub questions. First, to what extent is Europeanization taking place in G4 and G40 cities? This question allows us to understand, from the material gathered through interviews with city representatives, Europeanization as a maturing process, whereby European actions become embedded in the organization. By categorizing cities into minor, modest and mature levels of Europeanization, a valuable first step is taken to clarify Europeanization among G4 and G40 cities in the Netherlands. The second step is to understand which factors explain the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 municipalities? By using the ACTIE framework, derived from citizen participation literature, an analysis of these factors has been generated. Ultimately, it allowed us to generate an interrelated and coherent understanding of what factors matter most and in what sequence. The first order factors of motivation expressed in a coherent plan and backed up by political-administrative leadership is essential to initiate European activities and secure them over a longer period of time. These first order factors however also influence second order factors, such as staff competences, improved organizational knowledge a general positivity on the use of European activities. With regards to the literature on Europeanization, this is a more thorough understanding of what factors are of influence and how they interrelate with one another.

Taken together, an overview of Europeanization is generated that allows us to make recommendations for actors involved with Europeanization of cities. For G4 and G40 cities the most valuable recommendation is to approach Europeanization as an interrelated process that requires continuous. Motivation alone is therein not enough, but requires an integrated policy plan, backed up by political-leadership. Europeanization has to become embedded in the organization and this requires continuous attention and time to develop over time. In addition, an overarching actor who shares and monitors how cities deal with Europeanization is missing. The interview respondents expressed the need for better communication and information-sharing among cities to lower the challenge of Europeanization for unexperienced cities. In my view, this is a future role Platform31 could take up.

Content

Executive Summary	2
Foreword	6
1 Introduction: Cities leading the way to a better European Union in the future?	8
1.1 Research and Sub Questions	11
1.2 Relevance	11
1.2.1 Theoretical Relevance.....	11
1.2.2 Practical Relevance	12
1.3 Outline	12
2 Theoretical Framework	14
2.1 Cities as actors in multi-level governance of the European Union.....	14
2.2 Europeanization of Cities	18
2.3 Measuring factors for Europeanization through Engagement and Participation.....	22
2.4 Conceptual Model	28
3 Methodology	29
3.1 Operationalization	29
3.2 Research Design.....	35
3.3 Research Methods and data collection	35
3.4 Research Quality Indicators.....	36
4 Results and Data Analysis	37
4.1 Europeanization of Cities in Context	37
4.2 Which factors explain the level of participation for G4 and G40 cities?	42
4.2.1 Aims and ambitions.....	45
4.2.2 Contacts	47
4.2.3 Talents and time	48
4.2.4 Institutions.....	50
4.2.5 Expectations and Empathy.....	51
4.2.6 Interrelations between the factors for European participation of cities	51
5 Conclusion and Recommendations	56
5.1 Summary of the findings	56
5.2 Potential Theoretical Contributions	59
5.3 Reflecting on the research quality indicators	60
5.4 Recommendations and Further research	61
6 References	64
7 Appendix	68

Foreword

The first response people give when you tell them that you are currently doing a second Master program is “whoow! Couldn’t get enough of writing one thesis?” The horrible experience I had with my first master thesis in International Relations is easily pushed aside. Almost burned out and completely losing the connection with reality, as I focused on highly complex philosophical political theory, made me realize that finding the connection with the real world again was urgently needed. Whereas International Relations was interesting, the question how to make a career in it was difficult. I realized that going back to the practice through Public Management was the best thing to do for me.

Another thing I realized was that I urgently needed practical experience. Without an internship, it felt as if I had no starting point. I found a possibility to be a part-time intern at Platform31. An organization concerned with urban affairs, something that attracted my interest a lot. It got even better when I was able to become involved with European activities. Frieda Crooy, my internship supervisor opened doors, something I will always be grateful for. One of these opened doors was the possibility to write this master thesis in collaboration with Platform31 on a subject that was both interesting for myself, for the cities of concern as well as for Platform31. It was enormously motivating to write a thesis that was on the cutting edge of international relations and public administration. While talking to the respondents this tripartite relevance gave a huge amount of energy to make the best out of this thesis. I would like to thank everyone at Platform31 who helped me in whatever way. My special thanks go out to Frieda Crooy, Hamit Karakus, Jochem Heemskerk and anyone else I may have forgotten.

Moreover, I would like to thank all the interview respondents: Christiaan Norde, Mark Boekwijt, Frans van Bork, David Langerak, Murat Altunbas, Edwin Hubers, Arnout Smit, Leonie Hulshof, Janneke Lauwerijssen, Koen van Bommel, Vic van den Broek, Erik Stok, Linda Braam, Wimar Jaeger, Peter Rhebergen, Jolanda Hohensteijn en Daria Abolina.

I want to thank those who supported me during the entire process of writing this thesis. In the first place my supervisor Jurian Edelenbos. The friendliness and tranquility he brought about every time we discussed the thesis has been enormously beneficial. Moreover, I would like to thank my second reader Astrid Molenveld for her great feedback at the end stage of the thesis. Lastly and on a more personal note, I would like to thank everyone who was closely involved with the major transition I have been through over the last three months. This had a major effect on writing this thesis as well, so many thanks to those who helped me to get back on track.

I sincerely hope that the results and recommendations forthcoming this research can be beneficial in supporting both cities as well as Platform31 to make deliberate future decisions on how to deal with European activities.

1 Introduction: Cities leading the way to a better European Union in the future?

In 2016, the European Commission and UN Habitat published a report called 'The state of European Cities 2016'. The subtitle of the report was telling: 'Cities leading the way to a better future'. This is a trend that is observable in the European Union, emphasizing the growing awareness that cities are readjusting their position as new governors of public policy-making and problem-solving. In the same year, the Urban Agenda for the EU was agreed upon, encompassing an innovative agreement that aims to expand the influence of cities in the European Union (Potjer & Hajer, 2017). According to this Urban Agenda, cities are the closest to the citizen and are thus best able to judge how European rules, regulations and policies affect the situation locally. Undeniably, there is a growth observable in the way cities already play or will start to play a role in the European Union in the 21st century.

The ambition of European cities to get more influence on European policy-making, raises the question how this new role should take shape. Instead, one can argue that these innovative ideas are making the European Union increasingly complex, as it allows new actors to horizontally interact with one another to design the most effective policies (John, 2000; VNG, 2016). While this growing interdependency among cities expands the range of options considerably, it might also lead to questions how cities can most effectively deal with this new role (John, 2000). A side effect is that this also makes the European Union's multi-level governance structure harder to understand as well as more difficult to operate in as an actor (VNG, 2016). This is not always beneficial for the reputation of policy making in a European context, as the effects of the European Union on the everyday lives of citizens is often not very visible (ROB, 2013: 3).

Taking the Urban Agenda for the EU as an example again, there is a shared ambition to innovate the role of cities, but it is still open how to do this concretely. Therefore, the Urban Agenda is a sort of research and policy-designing phase, where twelve themes have been divided among participating cities from all over Europe to voluntarily investigate what is desired specifically. These themes are for instance: air quality, housing, circular economy, jobs and skills in the local economy and energy transition. At the moment of writing, these investigations are in progress and there is so far no idea whether these new ambitions will have any influence. It almost goes without saying that the future of European decision-making is wide open and continuously developing (Guderjan & Miles, 2016; John, 2000).

The increased focus on cities has been slowly developing for over two decades (Guderjan, 2015; John, 2000; Olsen, 2002; Wolffhardt, 2005; Goldsmith, 2003). A number of reasons can be given why this role of cities is becoming more prominent. In the first place, 70 percent of the European population is living in cities already and this number is predicted to increase to 80 percent by 2050 (European Commission, 2011). The influence of cities is thus predicted to grow with this, as their proactivity is stimulated (Guderjan & Miles, 2016). In the second place, there is a mutual relationship between the European Union and cities (ROB, 2013). On the one hand, cities increasingly shape the European agenda and are important for the execution of a lot of the European policies. On the other hand, European policies influence local politics

up to 70 percent (VNG, 2016; Urban Agenda for the EU, 2016). The growing influence of European policies provides a lot of opportunities already, for instance for economic cooperation, partnership with other local actors and the institutional development of sub national bodies (Guderjan & Miles, 2016; European Commission, 2011). Cities are thus seen as the new proactive actors, who will be increasingly concerned with international activities at the heart of their urban political affairs (Kübler & Piliutyte, 2007).

By becoming involved in European activities, cities are offered an increasing amount of opportunities to engage in projects, subsidy opportunities and policies that fit their own desires and needs (ROB, 2013; Wolffhardt, 2005; VNG, 2016). Concretely, four broad options are offered for cities in the European Union. Firstly, European rules and regulations have an impact on the urban policy areas. This implies that these can be used as an instrument to actively support local policy goals and targets, as well as the duty for local governments to secure compliance with European regulations within their jurisdiction (ROB, 2013; Wolffhardt, 2005). Secondly, cities can gain from various funding programs, such as the European Fund for Regional Development (EFRD) and the European Social Fund (Wolffhardt, 2005). Both funds aim to reduce the differences in welfare in European regions and are important instruments for municipalities that they can align with their personal policy aims (ROB, 2013). While the ERDF started as a traditional and top-down policy mechanism, it is nowadays flexible and dynamic and aimed to encourage the active participation of its actors (John, 2000). A third way in which Europe can be beneficial for municipalities is the participation in knowledge networks and other international relationships (Wolffhardt, 2005; VNG, 2016). As the ROB (2013) illustrates: Europe is an open space where almost 500 million people live and work in over 80.000 municipalities. Similarities between them can therefore always be found and can henceforth be an important way to learn from one another's approaches and decision-making. Fourthly and finally, cities have the ability to lobby to influence decision-making on the European level (Wolffhardt, 2005). These activities can be seen as a way to have the cities' voice heard on the European level.

The extent in which cities are actually engaging with European activities is called Europeanization (John, 2000; 2001). Whereas it is tempting to following John's definition that Europeanization is the extent within which European activities, such as rules, regulations and policies are represented in the organization of cities, this research wants to take a different view. Following Olsen (2002) "Europeanization has no single precise or stable meaning", making it difficult to use a concrete definition of the concept. As will be explained in more detail in the theoretical framework, this inquiry places the emphasis on understanding Europeanization as a process of imbedding European activities in the political-administrative organization of the city. This embeddedness of European activities in the organization is a proper reflection of how Europeanized cities are in practice.

This makes Europeanization particularly interesting: on the one hand, cities are important places to make the European Union function properly, as the bottom-up way of decision-making of cities allows Europe to reach its aims and ambitions. On the other hand however, Europeanization is depending on the engagement of cities. This is no problem when cities are motivated and ambitious enough to draft the Urban Agenda for the EU and voluntarily collaborate in developing effective results through

the twelve partnerships. But what if cities are less interested to become involved with Europe?

An interesting place to examine more closely in this context is the Netherlands. A number of reasons can be given for this. Firstly, the Urban Agenda for the EU that was just discussed briefly came about due to efforts of the Netherlands during the Presidency of the Netherlands of the Council of the European Union in 2016. One would expect, following this forerunning of the Netherlands, that Europeanization of cities is high on the agenda (Verhelst, 2017). Secondly, with an urban population of 90.5 percent, the country is already highly urbanized, which is making the role of cities important (ROB, 2013). Thirdly and related to the second reason, the role of cities in public decision-making is highly decentralized, giving a lot of freedom to cities and municipalities to make their own decisions (ROB, 2013). Such freedom allows cities to make their own cost-benefit analyses to judge whether European activities are useful or not.

A proper starting point for investigating the way Dutch cities Europeanize are the G4 and G40 cities. Taken together, these are the 44 largest cities in the Netherlands. The G4 and G40 are strategic networks, where information, resources and strengths are shared among like-minded cities. Relating back to the Urban Agenda for the EU, these networks were used to inform and gather the opinions of individual cities as input. The G4, or 'De Grote Vier' (G4), are the four largest cities in the Netherlands, which consist of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht (O+S Amsterdam, 2017). Thirteen percent of the population of the Netherlands lives in one of these four cities (O+S Amsterdam, 2014: 436). The Europeanization of these G4 cities is expected to be high, as they each have their own European & International Relations offices and they share a lobby office in Brussels, each with their own representative.

When we want to discuss the position of middle- to large sized cities, the G40 network can be helpful¹. The G40 city network is a collaboration between the 40 middle and large sized cities in the Netherlands (excluding the G4, who have their own network). The G40 has two main functions for municipalities: (1) to promote shared interests of cities towards national politics and policy making, and (2) to be a knowledge platform to share knowledge on urban affairs, between members, but also with partners on different policy terrains (Convenant G32-stedennetwerk en Platform31, 20 november 2014; Statuut G32 Stedennetwerk, 2016b). There are three main pillars: the physical, the social and the economic. Moreover, the G40 network has numerous thematic groups that can transcend the themes of the pillars. On European matters, the G40 has a thematic group that is concerned with European affairs. The aim of the thematic group is to monitor and promote the shared interests of G40 municipalities on European activities (Stedennetwerk G40 website, 30-4-2018).

Remarkably, the emphasis that cities are the future of the European Union, where a lot of attention is paid to, goes hand in hand with a differentiated pattern of cities that show interest and involvement with the European Union. Previous research already found that there is a highly differentiated pattern with regards to Europeanization (ROB, 2013; Schultze, 2003: 122). If these new developments around the innovative policy-making potential of cities in the European Union want to become successful, it is crucial

¹ Since 18 February 2018, the original name of G32 is no longer used, since the number of cities that joined the network grew to 40. Hence, the name changed to the G40.

that cities are actually Europeanizing in their daily activities as well. In practice however, there is a differentiated pattern of Europeanization that makes it worthwhile to inquire where this differentiation comes from and how the Europeanization of cities can be improved. Only if European activities are actively used on the local level on a structural basis, the flourishing role of cities in the European Union can actually become a structural improvement.

1.1 Research and Sub Questions

The introduction above culminates into the following research question: what is the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 cities? The goal of this thesis is thereby twofold: firstly, it aims to supplement on the existing theory on Europeanization of cities. Moreover, it hopes to offer new insights in how cities Europeanize and how they reach certain levels of Europeanization. Secondly, this thesis hopes to offer a concrete investigation in the practical challenges and opportunities for cities in Europeanization. Thirdly, this thesis aims to contribute to the already existing knowledge of Platform31 on the G4 and G40 to improve future steps for the organization on helping cities with their European activities.

To answer the research question in a structured way, it is helpful to pose two sub questions. The first sub question is: *to what extent is Europeanization taking place in G4 and G40 cities?* This question is helpful as it allows us to make a sketch of in what way cities use European activities. While this first sub question offers a sketch of the kind of activities cities are involved in regarding Europeanization, this is not yet a satisfying answer. We also want to know what drives them to do so, or formulated properly: which factors explain the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 cities in EU policy programs and projects? The aim hereby is to understand the rationale of municipalities behind the choices they make towards being active or inactive in European activities. This question is important as it aims to offer a deeper insight in why actors engage in European affairs, if they do so at all.

1.2 Relevance

1.2.1 Theoretical Relevance

This research has both theoretical and practical relevance. Theoretically, this thesis is relevant for three reasons. Firstly, European activities of cities are in a difficult position, as they cover the whole range of themes that are dealt with by cities locally. This means that European activities have to be carefully connected with thematic priorities of the organization. This usually happens internally, and little is communicated about how these decisions come about and why. As a result, there is a modest level of understanding why cities choose to engage in European activities and which factors are playing a role in these decisions (ROB, 2013; Guderjan, 2015). By zooming in on these factors that originate within and in close connection with the political-administration of cities this research hopes to contribute to the already existing literature on Europeanization of cities.

Secondly, this thesis wants to get a better understanding of the working of Europeanization and especially how cities decide and weigh their options. As De Rooij (2002: 449) mentions the new opportunities for cities means that cities have better strategic options that align with their interests. While the work of Wolffhardt et al.

published in 2005 gave some insight in this, it is of relatively little influence here in understanding the practical situation. Their model for instance, cannot be applied here, as there is a limited amount of knowledge beforehand on how cities arrange their European activities. The model they came up with, is thus only of limited use in this inquiry on G4 and G40 cities. Moreover, their research dates from 2005, 13 years ago, which demands evaluation and possibly refreshing insights.

Thirdly, this research wants to get a thorough understanding of Europeanization of cities, by linking the already existing data on Europeanization with literature on participation. This literature is predominantly focusing on citizen participation in democratic settings but can nonetheless offer crucial additions to the findings already available through the research of Wolffhardt et al. (2005). By making modifications in the scope and subject, most of these participation insights can be connected with the literature on Europeanization. The combinations of both these sets of literatures can thereby contribute to offer a comprehensive understanding of which factors influence the level of participation of cities in European projects.

1.2.2 Practical Relevance

Three practical reasons can be given why this investigation is useful. Firstly, there is a very limited understanding of which factors contribute to the participation of cities in European projects and programs. As cities are stimulated increasingly to engage with the European Union, such as through the Urban Agenda for the EU, it is important to investigate this in practice as well. Only by understanding what cities desire and what barriers they face to engage with Europe allow this innovative role for cities to work.

Secondly, it offers insights in how individual cities deal with European activities as a challenge. For every organization, being active in European activities demands resources and investments. How cities deal with this, is precisely what this investigation wants to understand. By allowing respondents to reflect on the city's European activities, this pattern becomes clear. These insights are often not so easily shared or analyzed in a more coherent way.

Thirdly, this inquiry is partly written for the knowledge and network organization Platform31. As an organization, Platform31 is involved in URBACT, JPI Urban Europe and is National Focal Point to promote and assist on European activities for cities and regions in the Netherlands. At the moment however, there is little organizational capacity for European matters, although there is a growing enthusiasm to do so. This research hopes to fill a knowledge gap on how Platform31 can best assist cities in dealing with European activities. And thereafter hopefully show the importance of Platform31 in supporting cities with organizing European activities.

1.3 Outline

The remainder of this research is set up in the following way. Chapter two will discuss how the Europeanization can be understood from a theoretical background. It will do so by first understanding the role of cities in the European Union, then it will turn to the literature of Europeanization. Afterwards, the literature on European engagement is discussed by developing a framework that explains which could potentially help to explain the willingness of cities to become involved with European activities. Chapter

three will discuss the methodological side of this research. Chapter four will discuss the results and analyze the findings. This will be done by answering the two sub questions. Firstly, to what extent is Europeanization taking place in G4 and G40 cities? And then turn to the second sub question: which factors explains the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 cities? Finally, the thesis is summarized, concluded and a number of recommendations are discussed.

2 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the theoretical background of this research is discussed. It will do so by first discussing the position of cities as actors in the European Union (EU) in section 2.1. As briefly discussed in the introduction, the European Union is transforming into a system where more and more complexity and blurred lines are visible. This section therefore connects the logic of the interactive governance literature with the literature of the European Union. This is done to place the discussion on Europeanization into the changing context of governance in the European Union. When this link is established, section 2.2 will discuss the concept of Europeanization, which is the extent within which cities are actually involved in European projects and programs. By discussing a number of models, this concept can be explained. Section 2.3 connects the Europeanization of cities with theory that allows us to get more insights in what drives cities to become involved. In this section an important body of literature is the literature on participation, where factors to become involved are a common point for discussion. Lastly, section 2.4 presents the conceptual model of this research, which is of use to understand the remaining steps of this thesis.

2.1 Cities as actors in multi-level governance of the European Union

Prior to going into depth with the concept of Europeanization, it is useful to contextualize Europeanization in the policy-making of the European Union. The concept of governance therein plays a considerable role. The increasing emphasis on the influence of cities over the last couple of decades in European Union policy-making can be understood through the growing influence of governance. Since the 1990s, the concept of governance is popularized, heralding a new reality in public administration and political science (Torfing & Sørensen, 2014). Governance can therein be defined in the following way: “the process of steering society and the economy through collective action and accordance with common goals” (Torfing & Sørensen, 2014: 334; Levi-Faur, 2012). Governance is a ‘new’ way to steer decision-making, as it is argued that central governments are no longer capable to deal with problems and finding the adequate solutions alone (Torfing, 2012; Peters & Pierre, 1998; Keast, 2013). As a result, other actors are invited to assist, initiate, design and execute public matters more actively.

Whereas the concept of governance is used a lot nowadays, the meaning of the concept varies widely per context. This makes governance a tricky concept, or as Torfing & Sørensen (2014: 333) state: “[g]overnance is a popular, but notoriously slippery term”. Due to the many different meanings and combinations with other prefixes, such as good governance, global governance, interactive governance and multi-level governance, it is necessary to clarify the concept properly. Because this thesis is related to the context of the European Union, it is useful to start there, by explaining the concept of multi-level governance. Afterwards, the link with the concept of interactive governance can be understood properly.

If we contextualize this perception of governance into the European Union, the idea of the EU as a multilevel governance system comes to the fore. Multilevel governance can be characterized as “the changing relationship between actors situated at different

territorial levels and from public, private and voluntary sectors” (Bache, 2005: 5). This changing relationship between actors is thus already embracing the changes brought about by governance, but adds a layered element into it, where the supranational European Union, member states and sub-national actors, among others are involved in the same context. Multilevel governance can therein broadly be understood as having an impact in two ways (Hooghe and Marks, 2003; Schultze, 2003). The first - *Type I multi-level governance* - resembles closely with federalism (Goldsmith, 2003). This implies that European integration is relatively limited and stable, as the focus of analysis remains primarily on central governments or institutions rather than on specific policy implications (Bache, 2005). Goldsmith (2003: 114) perceives this view as “an international regime, designed by sovereign states, who seek to regulate the development of economic and political interdependence [...] through governmental collaboration”. This rather traditional model resides closely with the idea that European politics is a statist subject mainly guided by the member states (Bache, 2012). Given the changing contextual landscape of governance, with new roles and actors, this understanding of multi-level governance is not very useful in this inquiry however.

It is the second type of multi-level governance that is of more use here. It depicts governance as a complex, fluid and interdependent process of European policy-making (Bache, 2005; ROB, 2013). In this reading, the multi-level governance structure of the European Union opens the process of decision-making of the European Union up to ‘new’ players, who are lower in the hierarchical structure (Goldsmith, 2003; De Rooij, 2002). Among these are local governments and cities. In this changing landscape of European policy-making, the changing relationships within the European Union are visible, whereby the traditional, formal way of steering processes top-down is slowly opened up and partly replaced by new actors. Torfing & Sørensen (2014: 334) argue that “in the new and emerging reality in Europe unilateral [action] is increasingly supplemented and supplanted by new forms of multilateral action.” This paves the way for understanding governance in the multi-level European Union as interactive governance.

Interactive governance can be understood as: “the complex process through which a plurality of social and political actors with diverging interests interact in order to formulate, promote and realize common objectives by means of mobilizing, exchanging and deploying a range of ideas, rules and resources” (Torfing et al. 2012: 12). Interactive governance can be seen as a collective noun for three types of interactive governance arrangements (Torfing & Sørensen, 2014). Firstly, governance networks “aim to respond to complex, conflict-ridden and ill-defined policy problems by facilitating collaboration among public and private stakeholders on the basis of interdependency” (Torfing & Sørensen, 2014: 334; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2016). Secondly, quasi-markets which “aim to respond to problems associated with public monopolies by enhancing public-private competition in the area of public service delivery, but the contracting-out of public services to private providers has to an increasing extent been regulated by relational contracts based on ongoing negotiations between the public purchaser and the private providers and thus takes the form of interactive governance” (Torfing & Sørensen, 2014: 334). Thirdly, public-private partnerships “aim to mobilize private resources and entrepreneurship in joint venture projects that are often found in the field of public transport and infrastructure provision” (Torfing & Sørensen, 2012: 334).

As this thesis is concerned with public entities only, the focus of interactive governance will be predominantly on governance networks (Keast, 2013). The broader concept of interactive governance will however be used, as it is more inclusive. Interactive governance is especially useful, as it has a special interest in the way participation and the organization of stakeholders are arranged in decision-making processes in the public realm (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016). Every kind of relationship that is taking place in the European Union can thereby be perceived as an interactive process among a plethora of stakeholders in decision-making processes, where the involvement of these stakeholders is regarded as pivotal. In the context of this thesis, these solutions can be found by cities by working together in governance networks. In this case, the G4 and G40 network.

A number of characteristics can be given that offer a better understanding how interactive governance shapes the context of policy-making in the European Union. Firstly, the European context can be understood as a nested system of horizontal actors, mutually depending on each other to make European decision-making as effective as possible (ROB, 2013; Torfing, 2012; Schultze, 2003). Both actors on the level of the European Union, as well as local governments as the most immediate actors involved with citizens are increasingly in immediate relationship with each other. Moreover, the traditional hierarchical levels, have their influence on the division of tasks and responsibilities. However, it has to be said that this hierarchy is fading and blurring over time (ROB, 2013). Thirdly, the European Union policy-making design allows for a relatively open process of negotiations, whereby actors should meet each other in the middle, each with their own preferences (Torfing, 2012). Policy makers should therefore be more responsive than ever before, as they could and increasingly should be able to connect local preferences with European means to realize these aims and ambitions (Røiseland & Vabo, 2016). Fourthly and finally, these negotiation patterns and interactions can over time produce public regulation, with common values, standards, scenarios, regulations and decisions (Torfing, 2012). In overall, the impact of this multilevel governance is felt by actors at all levels, as an extensive mobilization in the European space led to an explosion of new interests by 'new actors' (John, 2000; Schultze, 2003). The interactive governance design of the European Union is therein a means to realign resources among different levels and actors. These resources are for instance: funding, information, human resources, knowledge, support and competences (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016).

It is important to note that the literature on interactive governance is primarily written from the perspective of citizen involvement and engagement with decision-making processes. This implies that the two key aspects in the body of literature lay on the involvement of societal stakeholders, which is expressed in two ways (Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk, 2016). Firstly, that interactive governance, when set up correctly can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of decision-making processes. The input of relevant actors can therein be a vital element in crafting effective decision-making outcomes. Secondly, that interactive governance, through citizen participation leads to new democratic spaces, where new roles and relationships are crafted. In the context of this thesis, the subject of interactive governance is not the citizen. However, when examining the context of the European integration, it is important to emphasize that a similar aim for participation and engagement is required to make the working of European decision-making successful (Røiseland & Vabo, 2016). In the context of this thesis, the focus lies especially on the participation and engagement of cities in

European decision-making, a focus that has been absent thus far in the interactive governance literature.

As discussed above, the role of local governments in the European Union's decision-making processes will especially be related to governance networks. European policy-making is pushing for an expansion towards the role of cities over the last decades, putting cities increasingly to the test to organize themselves on European activities. One way to do so is through governance networks, which are designed to deal with the complexity, conflict and lack of information of the policy arena through collaboration among fellow local governments (Torfing & Sørensen, 2014). These collaborative governance arrangements can be understood as: "[t]he processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people ... across the boundaries of public agencies [and] levels of government [through networks] in order to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished" (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015: 724).

The functions of collaborative governance networks can be different however (Torfing & Sørensen, 2014). The simple form of governance networks aims to exchange information, knowledge and ideas that help to facilitate and improve decision-making. The more ambitious governance networks therein aim to have a common approach to deal with the decision-making. A number of remarks can be placed here. Firstly, these governance networks can thus be understood as a method to deal with the growing burden that is placed on them to act (Ansell & Gash, 2007). Following the growing role of cities in European policy-making, this implies that cities feel a mutual pressure to act. Again, whether they will do so is depending on the matter at hand. Secondly, the participation in the collaborative governance arrangement is voluntary and is largely depending on whether the expected outcomes will be successful (Ansell & Gash, 2007). As the level of European activity is an individual matter for a city, it is hard to have shared action through the network, as local aims and ambitions play a considerable part.

Thus, in the context of this inquiry, the role of the collaborative governance network can be seen as a means to deal with collective action dilemmas of cities (Scott & Thomas, 2017). The past two decades of focusing policies on cities in the European Union generated an increasing awareness among cities to Europeanize in some way. The recent attention generated by the Urban Agenda for the European Union, might have raised this pressure even further in the Netherlands (Potjer & Hajer, 2016). The G4 and G40 networks are thereby serving as a way to pool and coordinate information, knowledge and activities that *may* be of influence on their future actions regarding European projects and programs (Molin & Masella, 2016). The metaphor of Scott & Thomas (2017) of collaborative governance arrangements as a toolbox of strategic instruments seems accurate here. Municipalities *can* deploy the information once they feel that they serve individual interests and purposes (Scott & Thomas, 2017). The major overlap here with interactive governance is that through participation and engagement with the network and improved level of European projects and programs is expected.

The context that the bodies of literature on multilevel governance and interactive governance created are beneficial for the remainder of this thesis. It is now possible to perceive Europeanization from within this context. Moreover, it allows us to use the

literature on participation and align it more easily with the literature on Europeanization. While these appear to be different, they can be connected within the context of governance in the European Union. Later on the thesis, it also allows us to examine how the findings from this thesis can be understood in the bigger context of governance in the European Union and what this tells us about the state of affairs regarding the role of cities.

2.2 Europeanization of Cities

As the section above showed, the contextual setting of interactive governance is able to understand the broad range of possibilities for cities in the multi-level structure of the European Union. Local governments have to deal with new and changing relationships and by becoming part of governance networks these local governments are partly capable to deal with these new pressures (Torfing & Sørensen, 2014). The matter of involvement of cities in European decision-making can therein best be understood through the concept of Europeanization.

The extent in which cities are actually involved with European policy-making and standards can be understood as *Europeanization*. The concept of Europeanization has many different meanings (Olsen, 2002). Bache (2005) and Olsen (2002) offer a number of the ways in which Europeanization is perceived. Firstly, as a process that influences the European member states in a top-down manner. Secondly, building a European polity through institutions at the European level. Thirdly, as a growing subject or institution of importance for both national and sub-national layers of member states. Fourthly, the horizontal transfer of concept and policies in the European Union between member states. And lastly, a two-way interaction whereby states are both importing and exporting forms of organization through European affairs.

Thus Europeanization is a very broad concept that requires specification (Olsen, 2002). Theoretically speaking, it is worth emphasizing that within the concept of Europeanization the idea of a 'mismatch', 'misfit' or 'incompatibility' between Europe and the way cities are incorporated (Börzel & Risse, 2009). By doing so, there is a continuous adaptation pressure for cities to deal with European affairs and for the European Union to deal with the desires and demands of cities. As they are mutually depending on each other, Europeanization should be seen as a circle of mutual influence and adaptation to each other's needs and wants (Wolffhardt, 2005; Börzel & Risse, 2009). Schulze (2003: 124) argues that European integration is a two-way process of top-down and bottom-up, which on the one hand creates opportunity structures, and on the other hand can be seen as a response to the increasing demand for involvement in European policy-making (Callanan, 2012). The level of Europeanization of a city can in this reading thus be understood as the openness of a city towards European activities, to look for interesting benefits that can potentially be of use for their particular interests (Wolffhardt, 2005; Kübler & Piliutyte, 2007). The relation between cities and European affairs can therein be understood as a circular relation, wherein the one influences the other and vice versa. This thus not only involves the influence that Europe is having on the city but also how the city is engaging with the European institutions and programs.

This understanding of the relation between cities and Europe is similar with the theorization by Marshall (2005), who perceives Europeanization as an interplay between 'upload' and 'download' effects for local governments. The former implies "the transfer of innovative urban practices to the supranational arena, resulting in the incorporation of local initiatives in pan-European policies and programs" (Marshall, 2005: 672; Callanan, 2012). This is similar to the bottom-up activities by cities, as incorporated in the model above as the left part. The latter implies "changes in policies, practices, preferences or participants within local systems of governance, arising from the negotiation and implementation of EU programs" (Marshall, 2005: 672; Callanan, 2012).

To understand how cities are involved in European affairs, different models have to be sought however. An influential model to understand Europeanization of local governments is as a 'ladder of Europeanization' (John, 2001). Using the metaphor of a ladder, the more Europeanized municipalities are, the higher they are positioned on this ladder. As figure 2 shows, the steps are divided into stages that reflect the degree of choice local governments have over their activities. As John (2001: 72) argues: "the more the local authority undertakes, the greater the interplay with European ideas and practices and the higher they ascend the ladder". Europeanization is thus a way to transform local level politics away from nationalized and hierarchical forms of decision-making and develop towards a more interdependent and negotiated way of decision-making (John, 2000). The higher a municipality reaches on the ladder, the more they are involved in international networks and the development of international projects (ROB, 2013).

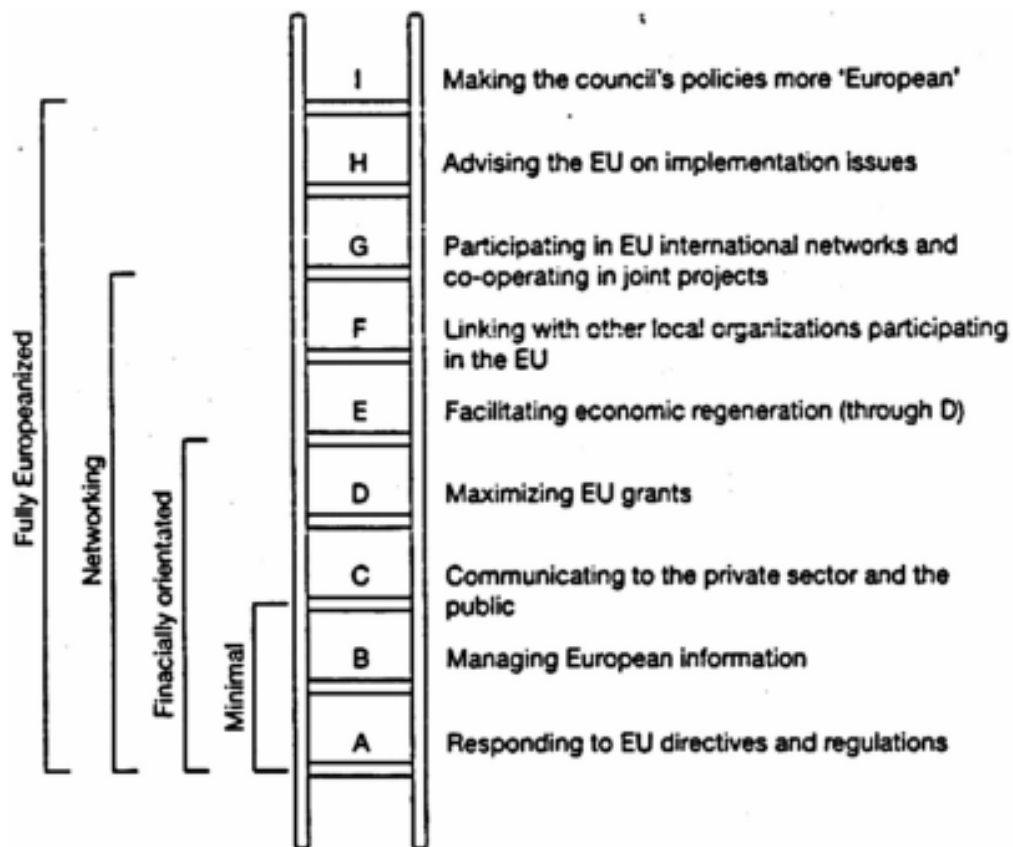


Figure 1 Ladder of Europeanization by John (2001)

In this projection, John (2001) comes up with four stages of Europeanization for municipalities. The first, and lowest stage is called 'minimal' and as the name implies barely any efforts are taken by the municipality to be active in European affairs. There is however still some interaction because European directives and regulation still have some impact on local decision-making. In addition, these municipalities will have to keep themselves up to date with the changes that take place on the European level that might have an impact on their local affairs. It is thus called minimal, as the municipality will not take any actions beyond those enforced.

The second stage is 'financial orientation' and as the name implies the local government is therein only pursuing ways to get funding from European programs and projects. These can then be applied to supplement local policy targets. The third stage is 'networking', where an active position is taken towards European actors who participate in the European Union. Cooperation is therein sought, and joint programs are established aiming to exchange knowledge that is beneficial for the municipality. The final stage of John's (2001) ladder of Europeanization is 'full Europeanization'. As the name already implies, this is the stage where Europeanization is regarded as successful. The municipality is involved in all the activities on the ladder and in the most matured stage it is actively lobbying at the EU level, to promote the desires of the city.

Another way to project Europeanization of local governments is by the categorization of Klausen & Goldsmith (1997). Their case studies on local governments in European programs culminated in four categories of European involvement, namely 'counteractive', 'passive', 'reactive' and 'proactive'. It is somewhat similar to the stages of the ladder of Europeanization of John (2001). The first category of counteractivity is composed of municipalities that are suspicious or skeptical about the role of the European Union on the local level. They are not involved in European matters and neither do they want to. Secondly, there are those cities that are largely passive in their relation to European programs. As Klausen & Goldsmith (1997: 240) explain: "[t]here is little or no officer commitment or involvement with European matters beyond that required by law and at best they and their municipality are making what can most accurately be described as an incremental adjustment to Europe".

The remaining two categories perceive European affairs more positively. 'Reactive' local governments who have a positive interest in EU policy programs. They are however not leading on this terrain but can be motivated to do so. Their involvement would however require them to invest in a European policy officer or an entire policy office. As Klausen & Goldsmith (1997) argue, this category of cities wants to learn from others and there is an awareness that steps have to be taken to internalize Europe into their administration. They are however uncertain about the steps to do so.

The final category – 'active' - are cities that take the lead in European projects and are able to influence policy making in Brussels (Klausen & Goldsmith, 1997). These cities are aware of the benefits that the EU has to offer and are actively working in ways to do so. As such, they have staff specialized in European affairs within their administration, that is concerned with European programs and have the ability to disseminate this information to the rest of the institution. Secondly, these municipalities are in contact with other authorities across Europe, with a frequent line of communication, co-operations and partnerships. These three models of

Europeanization clearly overlap with one another and can thus be used interchangeably in the further operationalization of this research (John, 2000).

These two models shows us how cities are Europeanized. There are however a number of problems associated with these two models, making them of limited use in this inquiry. In the first place, the ladder of Europeanization is strangely mixing the type of activities cities are involved in, with a hierarchical categorization. This assumes that activities can be clearly categorized and separated from one another, but in practice this is impossible. Wolffhardt et al. (2005: 407) argue that their case study of cities reject a strictly linear approach, in the way the ladder of Europeanization is portraying European activities of cities. There are often too many variations, deviations and imbalances to uphold this linear representation. For instance, cities who are oriented on obtaining financial means from Europe, can also pursue this through networking, lobbying activities and obtaining information. This already intermingles three different rungs of the ladder of Europeanization.

A second weakness of the ladder of Europeanization is the assumption that cities can be fully Europeanized when they are at the highest rung of the ladder. This suggests that every aspect of the cities political-administrative system is maximally involved with European activities. But as Wolffhardt et al. (2005) also argue cities cannot be in full agreement with the concepts and goals of the European Commission. Third, with regards to Klausen & Goldsmith's (1997) categorization the boundaries between the categories are rather ambiguous, counteractive and passive for instance are close to one another. Ultimately, it cannot be used to make a sample from this categorization.

For the sake of this investigation, there is another weakness associated with the two theorizations of Europeanization discussed above. These categorizations are ineffective as we would first require information about the activities of cities, before we can apply them to the model. But because the 44 cities are too extensive for this investigation, we need to draw a sample from this. Therefore, as mentioned earlier in this investigation, it is required to perceive Europeanization more closely to the organizational level of the city. It is not required to perceive Europeanization at the level of specific activities of European cities. It is enough to start from the fact that when cities are active in Europe, they do so in four different ways: information gathering, financial orientation, networking and advising and lobbying. The ladder of Europeanization and Klausen & Goldsmith categorization are therein very insightful as a starting point. But it is required to operationalize Europeanization more specifically to be of use in this case study. This will be covered in the methodology section in more detail.

For now, it is suffice to say that the focus of this thesis will be more on perceiving Europeanization as a maturing process, whereby the key is to embed European activities within the political-administrative system of the city for a longer period of time. It is then assumed that the types of European activities where John (2001) speaks of will play a role in one way or another. By doing this, it is then possible to obtain a general overview of to what extent cities are Europeanized and which factors influence their actions therein. To better understand the second challenge of this thesis, that is, which factors influence the level of Europeanization, it is required to get a better understanding of the literature on engagement and participation.

2.3 Measuring factors for Europeanization through Engagement and Participation

All of the conceptualizations so far tell us nothing about why cities choose to become involved in European activities. As we have stressed already, the current landscape of engagement of Dutch cities in European activities is differentiated. As a result, this investigation wants to learn more about the reasons why; the factors contributing to becoming involved in European activities. In response to this, Wolffhardt et al (2005) developed a model that had precisely similar objectives as the research question raised here. As a result, it can be a useful starting point and basis to build forth on. The analytical framework takes into account a multitude of motives, origins, goals and available instruments and resources. Following Wolffhardt et al. (2005) their work offers a sober assessment of the place of cities in a differentiated European Union, which is context specific.

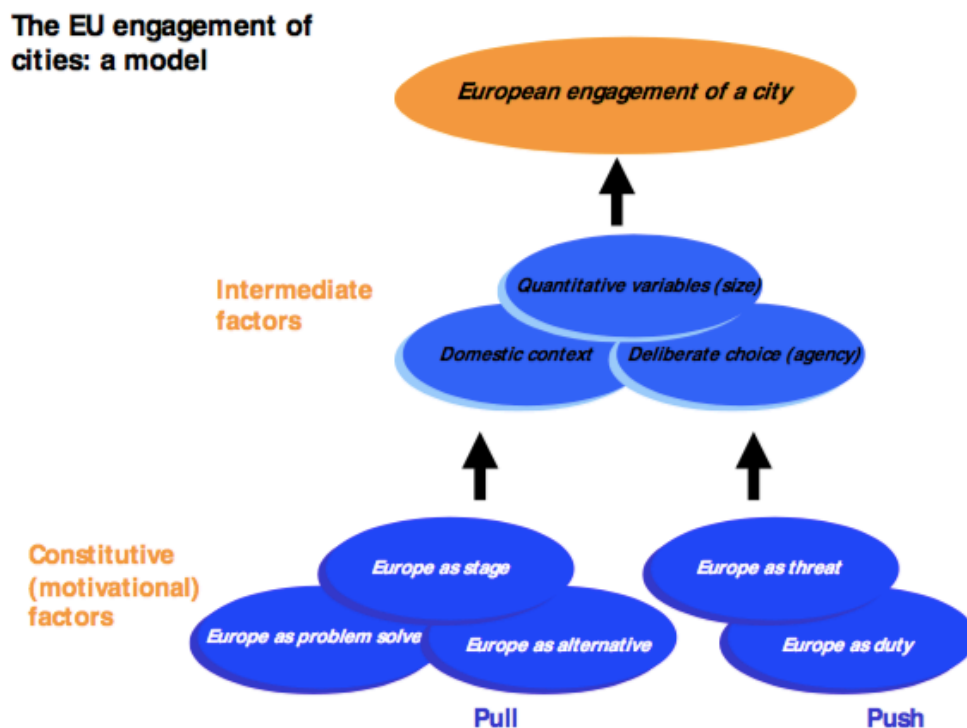


Figure 2 The EU engagement of cities model (Wolffhardt et al. 2005)

The model consists of constitutive (motivational) factors and intermediate factors. The former can be understood as “the driving forces behind any EU-related activities of cities – without them, no European engagement would materialize in the first place” (Wolffhardt et al. 2005). Five motivational factors are distinguished. Firstly, ‘Europe as a problem solver’ consists of socio-economic restructuring and innovative reasons to get involved with Europe. Secondly, Europe as stage where the EU is seen as a means to profile and identify oneself with Europe as an image. Europe can be seen as a ‘unique selling position’ (Wolffhardt, 2005). Thirdly, ‘Europe as a threat’ wherein European policy-making is seen as a pressure from the outside, changing the status quo in a municipality. The deep traditions or cultural expressions in cities can for

instance be changed as a result of changing European policies or regulations. Fourthly, 'Europe as an alternative' involves the usage of Europe to escape the domestic context, which is undesirable. Fifthly, Europe as a duty. This involves the perception that Europe is imposing new regulations or policies on the local context.

The latter are the intermediate factors, these encompass the background factors such as structural, boundary-setting or opportunities for EU-related action. Firstly, there is deliberate choice or agency, which encompasses the influence of change agents or norm entrepreneurs to 'go to Europe'. Additionally, these kinds of voices are able to create a capable administrative structure for dealing with European affairs, such as the financial means, the employment of staff, building up expertise in the organization and the formation of a European awareness. Secondly, what is the size of the municipality, which can co-determine the European activities cities are able to take? Finally, there are the constitutional arrangements, domestic laws and domestic politics that effect the ability to maneuver for cities towards Europe.

Now that Europeanization is discussed and the model by Wolffhardt et al. (2005) on engagement of cities in Europeanization offered a good insight, this is too limited to start the analysis yet. The model of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) is not really useful for a systematic analysis of which factors influence the level of Europeanization. As a result, we want to look at these factors more systematically by using another model. In doing so, we might derive some of these elements from the participation literature. Originally, the literature on participation is centered on the subject of citizens in reviving democratic institutions. This is an important thing to notice, as it does not allow us to immediately transfer the insights from the literature into this investigation. As the subject is different, one must be aware that minor adjustments might be necessary, in order to make the insights from the participation literature useful. Once again, by aligning the literature on city Europeanization with this body of literature, a more inclusive understanding of the factors to participate can be brought about.

Participation is thus understood as the participation of citizens in governance processes. In this reading, participation is regarded as "to have a part or share in something" (Hordijk et al. 2015: 130). By increasingly embracing governance as a steering instrument in society, the role of citizens in governance arrangements is well investigated. The role of citizens is regarded as vital to make governance network function effectively, and hence a lot of data is generated on this subject. Especially the factors that drive them to participate are investigated very well. These factors can be of potential use for this inquiry on municipal participation in European projects and programs. With minor modifications however, the insights from participation literature can be used in the context of collaborative governance arrangements by cities.

The participation literature has a number of influential models that can help to conceptualize the subject of municipal participation in European projects. Three models can therein be discerned, namely the Civic Voluntarism Model (CVM) by Verba et al. (1995), the CLEAR framework by Lowndes et al. (2006) and the ACTIE framework by Denters (2016). The CVM is designed by Verba et al. (1995) is a good starting point to understand the literature, as it perceives participation as a synthesis between multiple factors, namely: motivations (LIKE), resources (CAN) and mobilization (ASK) (Denters, 2016). The first is concerned with the citizens' willingness

to participate. The second with the citizens ability to participate and the third with whether citizens were invited/persuaded to participate (ibid.).

While this offers some insight into how citizen participation comes about, it is rather limited. As one of the oldest approaches on factors for citizen participation it has only three factors that help to explain participation, which is expected to be insufficient. Therefore, a second model comes to the fore, developed by Lowndes et al. (2006). The CLEAR framework is a comprehensive way to understand participation of citizens in governance arrangements. It is developed as an investigative tool for policy makers and practitioners to understand the barriers and motivations of citizen participation in their communities (Lowndes et al. 2006). A great strength of this conceptualization of participation is that it not only understands the perception of citizens and whether the participatory approach chosen is sufficient, but also offers insights in the way these policies can be developed or improved (Van Buren, 2017).

The CLEAR model has five key factors that promote participation, namely 'can do', 'like to', 'enabled to', 'asked to' and 'responded to' (Lowndes, 2006; Van Buren, 2017). 'Can do' can be understood as the resources that people have to mobilize and organize themselves in a governance arrangement (ibid.). Through speaking, writing and technical skills, this capacity to participate is promoted. The second element is 'like to'. Here Lowndes et al (2006: 286) stress the need of citizens to be engaged with the public entity in order to be involved in it. The third element 'enabled to', implies the infrastructure of groups and organizations, that can play an important mediating role with regards to enabling the opportunity to participate. The fourth element, 'asked to' involves asking people to deliver input. Such a request to participate can be an important driver for people to mobilize themselves in governance arrangements. The fifth and last element, 'responded to' is the effectiveness people want to see once they participate. Important elements of this is that people feel that their opinions are heard and are being taken into account.

While already very rich in the ability to explain citizen participation, the CLEAR model has been used as an important source of inspiration by Denters (2016) for the development of the ACTIE framework (see figure 1). Denters (2016) redesigned the categorization of Lowndes et al. (2006) into five more refined categories: aims and ambitions, contacts, talents and time, institutionalization and expectations and empathy. The *aims and ambitions* are the motivations why citizens choose to participate, what drives them to become involved? *Contacts* is the social capital of citizens, such as the network and contacts they possess that helps to become involved in citizen initiatives. These are also the political contacts with officials. The *talents and time* are the resources, such as the knowledge, financial capacity and availability of time. *Institutionalization* are the structural conditions that are of importance to have accessibility to participatory channels and procedures. *Expectations and empathy* entail the cultural conditions, such as the expectations people have that their participation will be useful and the feeling that their needs and demands are being heard.

Factor	Explanatory factor
Aims and ambitions	The motives of participants: why do they want to participate?
Contacts	The social capital (contacts and networks) of citizens. These can pertain to social contacts and 'political' contacts (with officials and institutions)
Talents and time	The human capital (knowledge: skills and subjective competence), the financial capital (income) and the availability of time
Institutionalization	Structural conditions for effective CIs: the availability of accessible participatory channels and procedures that determine the likelihood that CIs can and will be successful
Expectations and empathy	Cultural conditions for effective CIs: (a) Citizens have to expect that their plans will be seriously considered and can be successful and (b) politicians and professionals have to be sensitive to citizens' needs and demands and both understand (empathy) and be willing to act upon this (responsiveness)

Figure 3 ACTIE framework by Denters (2016)

A promising beneficiary of using the ACTIE framework of Denters (2016) is that it can also help to recommend further actions for improvement. In figure 3, Denters' shows how the factors for participation culminate into suitable mobilization and facilitation strategies that can potentially enhance civic engagement. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind the potential relevance of the ACTIE framework for this investigation on the G4 and G40 networks. Moreover, the ACTIE framework can be helpful to make fruitful connections with the broader literature on collaborative governance arrangements.

Before we are able to apply the rationale behind the ACTIE framework of Denters (2016) to understand what factors contribute to the levels of participation of G4 and G40, it is necessary to modify the model to municipalities and align it with the already existing work of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) to get well-structured conceptualization. To enhance the conceptual clarity of the ACTIE framework, it is important to maintain the categories designed by Denters (2016) and fit the model of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) within it. This decision is made, because the model of Wolffhardt et al. fall short on certain terrains, when we align it with the literature on participation, whereas it is too much oriented-on context. Because this case has only municipalities in the Netherlands, this context will be almost equal for all municipalities. Therefore, the explanatory power of the ACTIE model is regarded as higher in this case. As already briefly mentioned above, within the ACTIE framework, the following factors for participation can be discerned: (1) aims and ambitions, (2) contacts, (3) talents and time, (4) institutionalization and (5) expectations and empathy. In this section, we will discuss them in more detail and ultimately connect them to the work of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) to bring about a common understanding.

The first factors are *aims and ambitions*, where the original, citizen participation context, within which it was written by Denters is still applicable: why is the municipality willing to participate in European projects. As both Denters et al. (2012) and Alford (2002) argue that, motivation is the fuel for every initiative to take place; if there is no motivation to act, nothing will happen. This is the initial motivation of a municipality. Denters et al. (2012) and Alford & Yeates (2015) discern three types of motivation: social, targeted and intrinsic motivation. Social motivation entails the motivation to do something with the European Union; to help others. The second motivation are normative motivation, which entail the motivation to participate in a European project because there is a sense of identification with the European Union (Alford & Yeates, 2015) Thirdly, individual motives are closely related to the municipal self-interest. Participation in European projects thereby serve to benefit the municipality. It is important to bear in mind that motivation is hard to understand, following Alford & Yeates (2015). As framing is having an important influence on motivation. Is the participation perceived as a reward or a sanction that feels enforced? And is the effect of participation direct or indirect?

With regards to the motivational factors, the analytical framework of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) is useful, as it distinguishes between five motivations to become involved in European affairs. Firstly, Europe as stage implies using European resources for economic restructuring and generating social change (Kübler & Piliuteyte, 2007). Secondly, Europe as problem solver involves using Europe as a way to build image and identity (Schulze, 2003). This relates closely to the body of literature on branding and city branding (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012). Brands are therein understood as “symbolic constructs that add value or meaning to something in order to distinguish it from its competitors [that] are increasingly used in strategies for managing perceptions in the public sector” (Eshuis & Klijn, 2012: 24). European affairs are in way also used by cities to add a special construct to their policies and at a layer of specialty to their policies. Thirdly, Europe as threat perceives European Union policies and norms as a harmful transformation of local values. Fourthly, Europe as alternative can be seen as a way to avoid the domestic context, by using European arrangements and regulations in a creative way in finding local political solutions. Fifthly, Europe as duty is the activated role cities have to co-decide and develop European policies by actively delivering input. These five can be used as a primary way to understand the aims and ambitions category of Denters’ (2016) ACTIE framework.

The second factor for participation discerned by Denters (2016) is *contacts*. It entails the social capital of municipalities. With social capital the contacts and networks of the municipalities are meant. These contacts can be both political or a-political. Denters et al. (2012) elaborate that this also involves the relation between European projects and programs and existing social capital. The initiatives to become involved in European projects can be initiated in three ways. Firstly, these initiatives can originate in the own municipality, for instance because there is someone with the knowledge of European projects, who suggests using European means in the municipalities. Secondly, bridging social capital which involves having contacts outside the organization with European actors. People within the organization thus have connections with these people. Thirdly, linking social capital. This is the ability to make the connections discussed before and use them to set up European activities within the organization. As Denters et al. (2012) stress: it is important to have all three to create successful participation abilities of municipalities.

The role of facilitative leadership can be an important influencer in this second factor (Ansell & Gash, 2008). Social capital can both be stimulated by people who are in a position where they can have an influence on persuading municipalities to participate can be an essential driver to participate in municipalities, for instance by showing leadership that can be a convincing example for others or by directly encouraging others to do so (Scott & Thomas, 2017). These figureheads can thus have an essential task in promoting Europeanization, as they are critical in bringing actors together at the table and guide them through the difficulties of the collaborative process (Daley et al. 2013; Ansell & Gash, 2007). Wolffhardt et al. (2005: 415) have a comparable opinion on leadership, as they claim that there is often an “enhanced role of key persons”.

The third factor discerned by Denters (2016) is *talent and time*, which involves the means to participate in European projects (Schalk, 2017). These means can be both tangible and intangible. The former involves human capital, such as the knowledge within the organization and the availability of time. This can for instance be the lack of knowledge about European affairs, which makes the task too hard (Alford & Yeates, 2016; Brodie et al. 2009). The latter involves the financial capital of a municipality to become involved in European programs. European programs are therein often projected as free funds for municipalities, but there are a lot of investments required before these funds are actually realized (ROB, 2013: 63). These can thus be seen as start-up, as well as longer term organizational costs. The size of the municipality is regarded as an important factor, according to Wolffhardt et al. (2005: 415), as there is a “relationship between the size of potential gains (or constraints) and the size of a city, mirrored in the capacities of its political-administrative system”. Schultze (2003) complements by arguing that larger cities feel a higher necessity to move into international governance networks, more than small and medium sized cities do.

The fourth factor to participation is the institutional environment within which the municipality is operative. Are there sufficient participatory channels available for the municipality to become involved in and are the rules and procedures clear enough, are important elements within this factor (Daley, Sharp & Bae, 2013). The best way to summarize this fourth factor is the inter-organizational position of the municipality in the policy-making landscape (Brodie et al. 2009). Are there already a lot of connections on the European level, or do they have to be established? Previous program and project activities may be important here. Denters et al. (2012) complement by stressing the importance to respond to societal demands in a flexible way. Is the municipality capable to deal with European projects and programs in a way that benefits multiple elements of the organization or are they still a traditional and divided organization? Again, Wolffhardt et al. (2005) summarizes the institutional environment appropriately by defining it as “the place of municipalities (or particular cities) in the member state political system and their jurisdictional competences, as well as their national policy frameworks in thematic areas.”

The fifth and final factor of participation are the *expectations and empathy* of the municipality. These can be understood as the cultural conditions for effective participation. The expectation can therein be understood as the efficacy, which is the feeling that European projects and programs can actually make the difference for the municipality. This expectation and empathy can emerge both from within the own municipality, where European programs made a considerable difference, or it can be picked up by other municipalities (Brodie et al. 2009; Alford & Yeates, 2015). It is thus

an important way to encourage municipalities (Scott & Thomas, 2017). This efficacy resonates closely with the factors of willingness and ability. As Alford & Yeates (2015) argue: the greater the feeling of efficacy, the greater it resonates with the motivations of municipalities. At the same time, the more the capacity of municipality towards European projects is enhanced, the more the sense of efficacy is boosted. There is thus a mutual relationship here.

Moreover, empathy is perceived by Denters et al. (2012) as the apprehension for what the municipality wants or would like to achieve through European participation and how European programs or projects could fit into this. Satisfaction from a previous project is an important element here. This category can thus be understood as resonating closely with psychological barriers and opportunities (Brodie et al. 2009). Both expectation and empathy are not separately perceivable in the work of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) but might have been covered in other factors. By making them a separate factor in this study, their role can be investigated in more detail.

2.4 Conceptual Model

The steps taken in the theoretical framework can be summarized in the conceptual model. The independent variable are the factors of participation, which came about by using the insights from Wolffhardt et al. (2005) and supplementing it with the literature on participation. The ACTIE model therein came to the fore as the most useful means to measure the factors to participate in European activities. The dependent variable is the level of Europeanization forthcoming from the work of John's ladder of participation. As stressed already, John's framework is no safe and sound way to perceive European activities, as Wolffhardt et al. (2005) stressed already in their work. It is however a useful starting point, allowing us to analyze the differentiated field of cities being active or inactive in European activities.

The most prominent works in this regard where the model by Wolffhardt et al. (2005) and the ACTIE model designed by Denters et al. (2012) and Denters (2016). By taking this discussion into account, the conceptual model below can be regarded as a summary of what was discussed above.

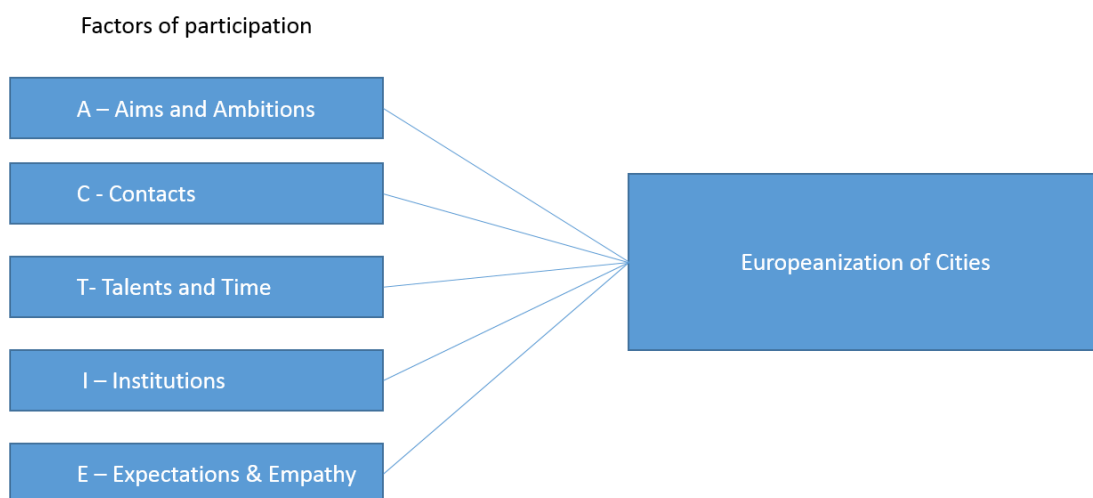


Figure 4 Conceptual Model

3 Methodology

In this section, the methodology of this research is discussed. Section 3.1 deals with the operationalization of the conceptual model presented above. Firstly, the level of Europeanization is operationalized, followed by the factors offer a possible explanation for cities to engage with European activities. Section 3.2 discusses the case study research design. Section 3.3 deals with the research methods and collection of data. Section 3.4 discusses some research quality indicators. Lastly, the interview questions are presented in section 3.5.

3.1 Operationalization

In this step, the concepts that came to the fore in the theoretical framework and expressed in the conceptual model are linked to ways to measure these concepts (Bryman, 2012). Because the G4 and G40 are 44 cities in total, choices have to be made to reduce the number of respondents. Due to time and resource restraints, the number of cities have to be reduced. One way to do this is by categorizing the cities according to their level of Europeanization. The categorization of Klausen & Goldsmith could be useful in this case. But in order to do this, we need information on how the cities score on European activities. This is the result we hope to find out by answering the first sub question. Thus, reducing the number of respondents through a categorization derived from the literature is not possible.

To be able to investigate the G4 and G40 some background information has to be given. The G4 cities are investigable without making any changes. For G40 cities this is different. Due to the differentiated pattern of Europeanization, a useful way to start the investigation is by making a rough division based on activity in the 'Thematic Group Europe' of the G40. Roughly speaking, this separation can be made on the basis of the minutes that have been taken during every meeting of the thematic group. By doing so, those active in the thematic group are regarded as Euro-minded municipalities, whereas those who are inactive are assumed not to be. This assumption does not automatically imply that cities that show up in the thematic group are active on European matters right away. What can be expected is that there is a sense of urgency to become involved with European matters, for whatever reason. It will be precisely these factors that this investigation hopes to find ultimately.

While one should not expect an all too immediate correlation between activity in the theme group and the level of Europeanization of the city, it is assumed that inactivity in the thematic group leads to a lower level of European activity. This also means that cities that are more involved in the thematic group Europe of the G40 are likely to be more involved in European activities. The thematic group is thereby regarded as a means for cities that they can attend, both by the public official as well as the administrative staff, to use in becoming active in European activities.

As this categorization is made, it is important to make a number of caveats regarding the thematic group Europe. Firstly, there are two types of meetings within the thematic group, *Bestuurlijk overleg* (Governing meetings, where the stable core of the thematic group is formed, by those municipalities who were willing to take place in the thematic group at the start of their governing period. Thus, once every four years) and *Ambtelijk*

Overleg (public servant meetings; implies that European oriented civil servants of municipalities are meeting to discuss shared issues. This is however expanded to general civil servants who are in the *Bestuurlijk Overleg* as well).

Secondly, on behalf of the chair of the thematic group, it is best to refer to 'regular attendants' instead of stable members. Thirdly, for the sake of this inquiry I make no division between the whether the participant is a governor or a civil servant. The presence of either of the two shows that the municipality has chosen to be present at the meeting on European matters. It is highly unlikely that a civil servant will be present without permission from their municipality. Thirdly, and related to the previous point, when making the categorization the division between *Bestuurlijk* and *Ambtelijk Overleg* is regarded as the contributing to the same goal, which is being interested or active on European matters.

When we take these points into account and use the minutes of the meeting over the period of 2015 to 2017, the following cities have attended meetings at least once over the last three years: Amersfoort, Arnhem, Delft, Deventer, Ede, Eindhoven, Enschede, Haarlem, Heerlen, 's Hertogenbosch, Hengelo, Leeuwarden, Leiden, Maastricht, Nijmegen, Oss, Schiedam, Sittard, Geleen, Tilburg, Venlo and Zwolle. These 21 cities are thus regarded as interested in European activities. This is however rather subjective, since in this categorization cities who have showed up once are regarded as similar to those who have showed up during every meeting. For the sake of this research the interest shown in the theme group is already an important signal that a city wants to be active on European activities. So even if cities have showed up once, it is likely that they are kept up to date regularly by the administration of the thematic group. This is in line with the ambition the thematic group has to signal developments and spreads knowledge in an open way.

The sample of cities comes about when we divide them according to their activity in the Thematic Group Europe. 21 of the cities are categorized as active, whereas 19 are inactive. Then we still have to select our sample: it is the intention to get a representative amount of six cities for active and six cities for the inactive category. This selection is made by making use of the network of Platform31, who is in close connection with the G40 coordinators of individual cities. By obtaining contact detail, it was possible to request whether these people can bring me into contact with the European coordinator of the city. By interviewing respondents from active and inactive cities, this thesis hopes to get an insight what factors explain this separation. In the table below an overview is given of the selected sample cities (highlighted).

Active	Inactive
Amersfoort	Alkmaar
Arnhem	Almelo
Delft	Almere
Deventer	Alphen aan de Rijn
Ede	Apeldoorn
Eindhoven	Assen
Enschede	Breda
Haarlem	Dordrecht
Heerlen	Emmen
's Hertogenbosch	Gouda
Hengelo	Groningen
Leeuwarden	Haarlemmermeer
Leiden	Helmond
Maastricht	Hilversum
Nijmegen	Hoorn
Oss	Lelystad
Schiedam	Roosendaal
Sittard-Geleen	Zaanstad
Tilburg	Zoetermeer
Venlo	
Zwolle	

Thus, for the G40 cities, 21 cities belong to the active category. The six cities that are selected as a sample from these 21 are: Amersfoort, Arnhem, Hengelo, Nijmegen, Schiedam, Tilburg and Zwolle. For the inactive category, the cities of Alkmaar, Almere, Breda, Hilversum, Zaanstad and Zoetermeer are selected as samples. When these 12 cities from the G40 are combined with the four G4 cities, a total number of 16 cities is under investigation here.

From the selected sample cities, the person most involved with general European activities in the city was asked for an interview as a respondent. The following list of people have been interviewed in the context of the research. The first table are the Interviewed G4 Representatives, whereas the second are the G40 representatives.

Name	Function	Date of interview
Christiaan Norde	Advisor International Affairs, City of Amsterdam	May 9 th 2018.
Mark Boekwijt	European affairs officer City of Amsterdam at G4 office in Brussels	May 22 th 2018.
Frans van Bork	European and International Affairs City of The Hague	May 23 th 2018.
David Langerak	Utrecht City Representative European Union	June 28 th 2018
Murat Altunbas	Policy Advisor EU-affairs	June 27 th 2018

Name	Function	Date of interview
Edwin Hubers	Fundraising Coordinator	May 31 st 2018
Arnout Smit *	Advisor European Affairs, Brussels Office – City of Nijmegen & Arnhem	June 1 st 2018
Leonie Hulshof	Director European Affairs, City of Schiedam	June 4 th 2018
Janneke Lauwerijssen	Coordinator Europe City of Tilburg	June 5 th 2018
Koen van Bommel	Concern Strategist, city of Zoetermeer	June 6 th 2018
Vic van den Broek	Strategic Advisor European Affairs, City of Breda	June 8 th 2018
Erik Stok	Advisor Public Affairs city of Hengelo	June 11 th 2018
Wimar Jaeger Esther van Rossum	Alderman city of Hilversum & Administration advisor city of Hilversum	June 21 st 2018
Peter Rhebergen	Pubic Affairs/ External Relations, City of Zwolle	June 25 th 2018
Jolanda Hohensteijn	Advisor External funding, municipality of Zaanstad	June 26 th 2018
Daria Abolina	Advisor of International Affairs, City of Almere	June 27 th 2018
Linda Braam	Internal accountant, city of Alkmaar	June 28 th 2018
*The cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen work together as the Region of Arnhem Nijmegen on European activities. The respondent thus reflects the views of both cities.		

When the categorization of potential cities to interview is made, the focus can now be on what the indicators on Europeanization look like. As the theoretical framework made clear already, Europeanization is hard to define and the theories on Europeanization that should be our first step into conceptualizing Europeanization are of limited use as they have weaknesses. The linearity of the ladder of Europeanization is not proven and is misrepresenting the practical situation. And moreover, the suggestion that cities can be ‘fully Europeanized’ is also problematic as cities can never be completely aligned with the goals and ambitions of Europe (Wolffhardt et al. 2005).

As mentioned already in the theoretical framework, this thesis will take the different ways in which cities are involved with Europeanization as a given. Information gathering, financial orientation, networking and lobbying and advising are therein part of the Europeanization of a city in one way or another. What matters is the extent in which cities are Europeanized. In this perception, Europeanization is perceived as a

maturing process that slowly embeds the European activities into the political-administrative organization of the city.

It is now required to operationalize Europeanization more specifically to be of use in this case study on G4 and G40 cities. It is more sensible to categorize cities on their level of Europeanization by looking at how embedded European activities are within the political-administrative systems of the cities. Are the Europe-related activities part of a coherent strategy or are they engaged with by accident? Are the activities loose projects or a broad shared agenda that covers the entire organization? These are the kind of questions that measure how Europeanization is embedded within the organization. This means that the separation of activities per se is not important – European activities are gathering information, finding financial support, networking and lobbying are closely interrelated and intersect one another constantly.

When looking at the level of embeddedness of European activities, the following three categories can be discerned. Firstly, the 'minor' level, where cities regard European activities of lesser importance, seriousness and significance. This is translated in the fact that there are no strategic policies or plans to get involved with Europe. Moreover, there is no one working within the organization who is coordinating European matters. When there are European activities taking place, often confined to a European subsidy for a thematic project in the organization, this is more or less a coincidence. Such coincidence came about for instance because the regional network offered such opportunities or because a staff member had experience with European subsidy before.

The second level of Europeanization is 'modest'. With the word modest, Europeanization is limited, but is nonetheless part of a growing ambition stressed out in policy plans. This means that European activities are increasingly stressed as important and that there is a specific European officer working within the organization who secures the continuity and attempts to connect thematic priorities with relevant European opportunities. The usage of European activities is thus far from perfect, but there is a growing conscious of its role for the city.

The final category is the mature level of Europeanization. When a city reached this level of European activities it is by no means the case that Europeanization is completed, as connecting European opportunities with thematic priorities is a continuous process. Organization-wise however, the city reached a coherent strategy on securing European activities in the organization. European officers are continuously working on effectively using European activities, recommending opportunities and evaluating on the achievements. The mature level of Europeanization is showing an embeddedness over time, making Europe an essential element of achieving policy making in the city.

After the measurement of Europeanization is discussed, it is time to turn to the operationalization of the second sub question: which factors explain the level of Europeanization. As the theoretical framework set out already, to answer this question insights from the literature on participation is used. The ACTIE model was the most convincing to obtain a good explanation. The variables are thus derived from the individual components of the model: Aims and ambitions, Contacts, Talents and time

and Institutions and Expectations and Empathy. The table below offers an overview of indicators per variable.

Concept	Variables	Definition	Indicators
Factors to participate (ACTIE)	Aims and ambitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “the interests, preferences and objectives of cities as they emerge from the perceptions, deliberations and decision-making processes among the actors of the political-administrative system” (Wolffhardt et al. 2005: 410). - Five types of motivations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Europe as a problem solver 2. Europe as an image 3. Europe as a threat 4. Europe as alternative 5. Europe as a duty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The primary motivation of the municipality to be active on European activities. - Policy plans have the intention to participate in European activities.
	Contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The social capital of the municipality on European affairs (Denters, 2016). - The enhancing role of leadership, both internally and externally. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The municipality has multiple relationships with people outside the organization who are specialized in European activities - There is a strong sense of leadership that promotes European activities (internal/external)
	Talents and time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “the creation of a capable administrative structure for dealing with EU affairs, the disposition of necessary financial means, the employment of committed staff, the build-up and availability of expertise in the administration and European awareness” (Wolffhardt et al. 2005). - Size – Wolffhardt et al. (2005) “the relationship between the size of potential gains (or constraints) and the size of a city, mirrored in the capacities of its political-administrative system, can co-determine whether a city embarks on EU-related activities, and if yes, on which sort of engagement” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sufficient personnel. - Competences of staff. - Capacity to be involved in European activities = size.
	Institutional factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitutional (or quasi-constitutional) arrangements, domestic laws and domestic politics - Wolffhardt et al. (2005) “the place of municipalities (or particular cities) in the member state political system and their jurisdictional competences, as well as national policy frameworks in thematic areas which are important to cities”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Current rules and procedures in the Netherlands are suitable for enhancing European activities. - The procedures are open and understandable enough to work with.
	Expectations and Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cultural conditions for effective participation within the municipal organization. Is there a shared view within the organization on European affairs? This can be expressed in: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Efficacy – European activities as perceived as beneficial for the aims and ambitions of the municipality. II. Empathy – there is a shared mission on what the municipality wants to achieve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European activities bring about a change in the municipality. - There is a shared belief that European activities are helpful.

3.2 Research Design

The main focus of this research will be on the position of municipalities and their collaboration in the G4 and G40. The extensive examination of these two networks can thus be understood as a case study (Bryman, 2012). The definition of a case study is the following: “a research design that entails detailed and intensive analysis of a case [or multiple cases]” (Bryman, 2012: 709). As the adjusted definition already makes clear, it is sometimes better to speak of a multiple case study. In this investigation for instance, the G4 and G40 municipalities are investigated, as they have different ways of organizing the network as well as different levels of Europeanization. By comparing and contrasting these two cases, insights can be generated that might be of relevance for a better understanding of the contemporary situation.

We can extend this discussion by discussing the rationale behind choosing a multiple case study design (Yin, 2014). These reasons for choosing a case study should not be seen as rigidly separated, but as Bryman (2012) “[a]ny case study can involve a combination of these elements, which can best be viewed as rationales for choosing particular cases”. In the light of the G4 and G40 network, it is a combination of a ‘representative case’ and a ‘revelatory case’. The former implies that the case study design is chosen as it helps to capture conditions and circumstances of commonplace situations. As mentioned before, Europe has tens of thousands municipal organizations, who all face the same task to Europeanize and make decisions towards actually doing that. Therein, this case is an investigation of the Dutch municipalities and thus is a small selection of a common phenomenon. However, the case is also revelatory, as it offers the opportunity to investigate and analyze a not very accessible phenomenon. The operations of European activities often occur behind closed doors and the factors to become active on the European level is not investigated well. The last research dates from Wolffhardt et al. (2005), the chance to investigate these two networks through Platform31 can thus generate fruitful theoretical and practical insights from behind closed doors settings.

3.3 Research Methods and data collection

In this section the research methods and data collection will be discussed. This simply implies the techniques used in this thesis to collect data (Bryman, 2012). Two research methods will be used to gather data for this investigation: document analysis and qualitative interviews or in-depth interviews. The former, document analysis is vital to get an initial understanding of the position of the municipalities regarding their activities ‘in’ Europe.

It is now required to find people who represent these categories through interviews. Interviews are a way of collecting data that “facilitates direct communication between two people, either face to face [which] enables the interviewer to elicit information, feelings and opinions from the interviewee using questions and interactive dialogue” (Matthew & Ross, 2010: 219). Precisely these emotions and feelings of people who are concerned with European affairs in their municipality is important to investigate, as it offers important insights regarding the factors that contribute to European activities. The respondents are chosen through ‘purposive sampling’, which implies that “participants are chosen because of their experience or opinions on the research topic”

(Matthew & Ross, 2010: 225). The network of Platform31 is an important means to obtain these contacts. These contacts can be both current policy officers and officials or former members. The documents analyzed prior to the interviews can offer important input for the interviews.

Both the document analysis and interviews are converted into written text and then analyzed through coding. Coding is a way to classify or categorize pieces of data through a retrieval system (Babbie, 2013). As the operationalization already showed, the ACTIE framework offers a clear structure that can be applied in the coding of the documents and interviews.

The indicators defined in the tables above have been converted into questions that reflect the indicators. These questions have been used for the qualitative interview. They are included as appendix of this research.

3.4 Research Quality Indicators

It is important to reflect on the quality of the research beforehand, by reflecting on a number of quality indicators. These research quality indicators are the internal validity, external validity and the reliability of the investigation. The first – internal validity – is concerned with “whether a conclusion that incorporates a causal relationship between two or more variables holds water” (Bryman, 2012: 47). How can we be sure that the factors actually contribute to the level of participation of municipalities in European activities? In response, one can argue that the investigation is deeply embedded in both the literature on Europeanization as well as the participation literature. By bridging and connecting both sets of literatures, an even stronger framework for explanation is constructed. If these factors are then connected with the information available, as well as with the experiences of people concerned with the decision-making, a concise explanation can be generated.

The second research quality indicator is the external validity. This is concerned with the question “whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context” (Bryman, 2012). Since the investigation is building forth on the Europeanization literature, this case study on cities in the Netherlands fits this neatly. Because the Netherlands is one of the member states of the European Union, this investigation can be regarded as an important empirical addition to the already existing research. Since the most convincing investigation dates from 2005, the research can offer important insights into the status-quo.

The third research quality indicator is reliability, which concerns “the consistency and repeatability of the research procedures” (Yin, 2014: 240). By clearly explaining what steps are taken in this investigation, this research is transparent enough to allow other researchers to redo this investigation. However, with regards to findings the same results, questions can be raised. As this is a politically turbulent landscape, where election outcomes matter a lot, it might also be an unstable environment. This might be reflected in the reliability of the findings. The latest municipal elections took place in March 2018, which led to new coalitions and formation procedures in cities. This might also be reflected in the research, where new ambitions might change the outcomes. However, by focusing on the policy officers, working within the organization, a proper, hopefully longer-term view can be developed, as their position is not immediately affected by the election outcomes.

4 Results and Data Analysis

At this stage of the research, the theoretical framework offered a clear theoretical focus that is further clarified by operationalizing the variables. In addition, the research technicalities have been discussed, . Answering the research question in two steps, along two sub questions: section 4.1 deals with the question how Europeanization looks like for G4 and G40 cities, whereas section 4.2 attempts to find the factors that explain the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 cities.

4.1 Europeanization of Cities in Context

In order to obtain insight in the way cities Europeanize, the categorization of cities into three levels of embeddedness helps us to answer the first sub question. This sub question is the following: to what extent is Europeanization taking place in G4 and G40 cities? Before discussing how G4 and G40 cities score along this embeddedness scale on Europeanization, it is necessary to make some general observations from the data.

A first observation is the importance of the changing political landscape that should be taken into account in this inquiry. It is this continuously changing political context that could influence how cities think about European activities within a four years term, after which new municipal elections take place. This research was performed in the period right after the municipal elections that took place in March. As a result, during some of the interviews, coalition negotiations were taking place or new coalitions had just been established. These new coalition agreements are the political ambitions and motivations of the city for the coming four years, where European activities will or will not be mentioned. It could therein also happen that cities change directions, whereby the strategic course on European activities is also decided upon.

Two illustrations from the interviews confirm this observation. The city of Tilburg for instance, started with European activities in 2014 as part of the previous coalition aims and ambitions (Respondent city of Tilburg, 5-6-2018). Now, four years later and with a new coalition just installed, the need to evaluate Europe is required to find whether the previous four years were effective enough. Moreover, the new coalition agreement is also scanned by the staff working on European activities, to find how the European activities could be of use with the thematic priorities expressed in the coalition agreement. In the city of Rotterdam, a similar process was taking place, where the connections between the new coalition's aims and ambitions and the plethora of European activities available are found by an analysis (Respondent city of Rotterdam, 27-6-2018).

A second observation is the process of Europeanization unfolds by continuously connecting the available means with the local aims and ambitions of the political-administrative system. When cities decide to be actively involved with European means, they do so in close connection with the local ambitions they have. Only by doing this, European activities can be concretized and shaped into malleable means for the city. This observation is in line with the literature on Europeanization that stresses that Europeanization can only be effective when the local thematic priorities

are aligned with the available European means (ROB, 2013: 65;). The representative from the city of Schiedam illustrated this most accurately by stating: “we have set thematic priorities on which European activities we want to be involved in. This means that we don’t throw ourselves onto any kind of European subsidy that is available to us. Let’s take heritage for instance, we don’t have a thematic focus there. So we do not invest our time and effort in obtaining a European subsidy on this” (Representative City of Schiedam, 4-6-2018).

A final observation is that Europeanization of cities is a continuous and ongoing process that is never finished. Following the work of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) who already criticized the possibility of being ‘fully Europeanized’. But it is worth emphasizing that besides this, Europeanization requires continuous political-administrative attention to keep it on the agenda. In the remainder of the analysis, more detail and analysis will lead to a more coherent understanding what factors matter in putting Europeanization on the agenda of a city and maturing it over time.

It is the intention to now reflect on how cities score on the basis of this new categorization of Europeanization, based on embeddedness. As mentioned already, three indicators are important in doing so: whether the city has an overall European agenda, reflecting the policy of the city on European activities, whether the city has a general coordinator on European activities and whether these activities have been on the agenda for a longer period of time (two terms of four years). For G4 cities, this pattern is straight-forward, as both of the indicators are present in their political-administrative organizations. Therefore, the G4 cities are all matured on Europeanization. For the G40 cities are more differentiated. It is useful to reflect this in a table, where the two indicators are set out per city. (‘-’ means that there is no officer or plan, + means that there is an officer of plan) in the organization.

City	EU policy officers	Political-administrative plan on EU	European activities are on the agenda for a long time
Alkmaar	-	-	-
Almere	+	-	-
Amersfoort	+	+	+
Arnhem/Nijmegen	+	+	+
Breda	+	-	-
Hengelo	+	+	+
Hilversum	-	-	-
Schiedam	+	+	+
Tilburg	+	+	-
Zaanstad	-	-	-
Zoetermeer	-	-	-
Zwolle	+	+	-

The categorizations made in the tables above, can now be summarized into the table below. As mentioned, the G4 cities are all matured in Europeanization. For the G40 cities, six cities (N=6) are in the minor category, three cities are in the modest category (N=3) and three cities are in the mature category of Europeanization (N=3).

	Minor level of Europeanization	Modest level of Europeanization	Mature level of Europeanization
--	--------------------------------	---------------------------------	---------------------------------

Amsterdam			X
Rotterdam			X
Den Haag			X
Utrecht			X

	Minor level of Europeanization	Modest level of Europeanization	Mature level of Europeanization
Alkmaar	X		
Almere	X		
Amersfoort		X	
Arnhem/Nijmegen			X
Breda	X		
Hengelo			X
Hilversum	X		
Schiedam			X
Tilburg		X	
Zaanstad	X		
Zoetermeer	X		
Zwolle		X	

It is important to stress that this does not mean that cities who are categorized in the minor category are not involved with European activities. In fact, some of them do quite a lot of activities. This categorization is made to stress the stability over time in Europeanization, which is created by institutionalizing it into the political-administrative organization of the city. If this is not happening, there is a risk that the European activities in which the city is involved at the moment will collapse. This could for instance happen when a key staff member or alderman who was active on European activities by actively promoting them leaves the organization. Because nothing is concretized and strategized on paper and shared with the wider organization, all the knowledge, connections and insights obtained by this person will disappear, leaving a gap in the organization. Especially when European activities are still in the early stages, the city is vulnerable for this.

Two illustrations of this can be given. Firstly, the city of Zoetermeer, who was seriously active in a European network on New Towns in Europe. When this network collapsed, due to a lot of inactivity and directions, the entire European activities of the city of Zoetermeer perished with it. As there were no concrete directions on how to use Europe for the local thematic priorities, Europe remains an undefined landscape, which is difficult to manage in case changes occur, such as the collapse of a network. Another example is the city of Almere, where the respondent (City of Almere, 27-6-2018) was strongly involved in European activities for the municipality and she dedicates 80 percent of her time in doing so. However, there is no concrete plan or scheme on how to use Europe or how the activities are evaluated over time. When the respondent decides to leave the organization, it is questionable whether the organization has enough resilience and knowledge to continue the activities she is currently working on.

It is now useful to pick out some examples per category. Starting with the G4 cities, it is observable that they are all on the highest level of European activity. This is expressed primarily in the mature way they perceive European activities. Their coherent strategy has been around for years and is effectively matched with the local thematic priorities that the political-administrative management comes up with. The cities often have a number of thematic focuses that will be pursued and promoted

through Europe. In the Metropole Region of Rotterdam and The Hague for instance, the Next Economy story developed by Jeremy Rifkin determined that there are five themes for the city related to Europe. These are digitalization, smart energy, circular economy, entrepreneurship and innovating society (Respondent City of Rotterdam, 27-6-2018; Respondent City of The Hague, 23-5-2018).

Moreover, there is a stable number of staff, an entire team that is concerned with European activities. In all the four cities, this is working in a similar way: there is a European and International office that has three focusses: 3 to 4 people on Europe, 3-4 on subsidy and 3-4 on International relations (Respondent City of Amsterdam, 9-5-2018; Respondent City of Rotterdam, 27-6-2018; Respondent City of The Hague, 23-5-2018; Respondent City of Utrecht, 28-6-2018). This level of specialization is one of the most feasible forms of maturity on Europeanization.

For the G40 cities the institutionalization of European activities is more differentiated and spread among the three levels of Europeanization identified above. For the minor level of Europeanization there is barely any incentive to become involved in European activities in a coherent way. This often leads to a rather passive stance towards becoming involved in European activities. The city of Zoetermeer is an example for this (Respondent City of Zoetermeer, 6-6-2018). There is currently no ambition to do anything with European activities. The city is part of the Metropole Region of Rotterdam The Hague and derives most of its collaborations from this place. European activities are therein not seen as contributing to any local ambitions, as the metropole region is a dominant focus for them. This means that any activities picked up by the city of Zoetermeer is forthcoming from activities of the Metropole Region connections.

The city of Alkmaar is a second illustration for the minor level of Europeanization (Respondent City of Alkmaar, 28-6-2018). Here there is involvement in two projects that are related to local projects in the city but there is no concrete overall view how European activities might benefit the city more structurally. Also, the activity of the city of Alkmaar in Europe are limited to subsidy only. The single subsidy officer they have in the organization is the only one who is dealing with these matters, which is tricky as when this person leaves, the European activities of the city of Alkmaar might collapse.

The second category are cities with a minor level of European activities. The first example is the city of Amersfoort, where there has been an orientation towards increasing the revenues of the city through finding European funding. This started in the period after the 2008 crisis, when the city was in financial discomfort. Europe was used as a strategy to increase the amount of money in combination with reducing the expenditure. When talking to the subsidy officer of the city in the interview, it is observable that the city is becoming more ambitious in Europe to expand this focus. In fact, they already do so, by participating in networks. Moreover, the city of Amersfoort is closely linked with the Utrecht Region in finding subsidies. This shows how interrelated the activities in Europe are, making it useless to rigidly separate them, let alone to build this investigation around it.

The city of Zwolle is a second example in this minor level of Europeanization. European activities have been concretized for four years now in Zwolle, allowing the activities to mature over time. Currently, with the new coalition formed, European activities are also evaluated and connected to the new ambitions. The city of Zwolle is now for instance

trying to obtain a position in the VNG Europe and International group through their Alderman. Here you see that the European activities are developed over time through evaluation and exploring new directions.

The mature level of Europeanization are cities that have European activities ingrained in their organizations, which allowed to mature over time. The first example is the city of Schiedam that has been active on European activities since 2009. In 2012, the newly assigned mayor Cor Lamers was a dedicated Euro-minded governor, who could use the already available structure and expand it for the city of Schiedam even more. The respondent from the City of Schiedam (4-6-2018) stressed that this maturing of European activities allowed Schiedam to profile itself in Europe and is now an appreciated face in the Eurotowns network for cities who have a population smaller than 250.000 citizens.

The city of Hengelo is a second example (Respondent city of Hengelo, 11-6-2018). Their European strategy is also existing for over a decade now and operates in close connection with the Region of Twente, where the cities of Enschede and Almelo are also involved in. With an expertise that grew over the years, the Region is now actively developing European strategies that promote the wellbeing of the region as a whole. One of these strategies is now focusing on making the region of Twente a railway hub between Amsterdam and Berlin. This is part of their lobbying strategy in Europe and is also intended to obtain European funding that ultimately benefits the wellbeing of the entire region.

In sum, this section questioned to what extent is Europeanization taking place in G4 and G40 cities. Before answering this question, a number of observations were made that are important to better understand Europeanization. The first observation is that Europeanization is a continuous process that requires continued attention in the organization of the city. Secondly, the Europeanization of cities takes place in politically sensitive environments, therefore continuously affecting the strategic choices of the political-administrative organization of the city. Thirdly, Europeanization can only work when cities find decent connections between the objectives and challenges locally and the suitable European means. Finally, cities do not work together only through the G4 or G40, as those are just two of the platforms to be active on. One of the most mentioned ways to collaborate is through the region, teaming up with other cities and the province.

Taking these observations into account, it is important to redefine the way Europeanization should be perceived. Therefore, it was argued here, that it makes more sense to understand Europeanization by looking at how institutionalized European activities are in the political-administrative organization of the city. By doing so, three levels of Europeanization were defined: minor, modest and mature. With this categorization of cities in mind, it is possible to turn over to the second sub question, which is concerned with the question which factors lead to specific levels of Europeanization.

4.2 Which factors explain the level of participation for G4 and G40 cities?

The previous section helped us obtain a better understanding of how G4 and G40 cities engage in European activities. This resulted in a categorization of Europeanization based on the embeddedness of European activities in the political-administrative organization of the cities. The next step is to get better insight in what influences cities to engage with European activities. More concretely, this section deals with the question which factors explain the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 municipalities?

To answer this question, the ACTIE framework is used. To best understand how cities scored on individual factors, a categorization of three colors is used. Green represents that the factor is represented in the political-administrative organization of the city. Red means that the factor is not present in the activities of the political-administrative organization. Lastly, orange means that it is difficult to give a clear answer on the specific factor. The table below can thus be understood as a summary to how individual G4 and G40 cities scored per factor.

	Level of Europeanization	Aims & Ambitions		Contacts		Talent & Time		Institutions (rules and procedures)	Empathy & Expectations	
		Motivation	Policy documents	Connections	Leadership	Qualified staff	Capacity		Brings change	Shared belief
Amsterdam	Mature	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green		Green	Orange
Rotterdam	Mature	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green		Green	Orange
The Hague	Mature	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green		Green	Orange
Utrecht	Mature	Green	Green	Green	Green	Orange	Green		Green	Orange

	Level of Europeanization	Aims & Ambitions		Contacts		Talent & Time		Institutions	Empathy & Expectations	
		Motivation	Policy plans	Connections	Leadership	Qualified staff	Capacity		Brings change	Shared belief
Alkmaar	Minor									
Hilversum	Minor									
Zoetermeer	Minor									
Almere	Modest									
Amersfoort	Modest									
Breda	Modest									
Zaanstad	Modest									
Arnhem/Nijmegen	Mature									
Hengelo	Mature									
Schiedam	Mature									
Tilburg	Mature									
Zwolle	Mature									

Looking at the results of these two tables, three general observations can be made. Firstly, the institutions column is colored grey. As discussed before, these institutions concern the constitutional arrangements, domestic laws and domestic politics. In the study of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) this was a useful variable, as the cities under inquiry were from different countries in the European Union. But since in this inquiry all the cities are Dutch, there is no such variation between laws and politics. Therefore, it makes no sense to discuss institutions per individual city.

Secondly, qualified staff and shared belief are taken up here and both of them are colored orange. During the interviews, it became clear that by asking people whether the organization had enough qualified staff most of the respondents answered: “it depends on where you look”. Whereas the mature cities, with their experience replied more positive and convinced that they can at least find the right people, this does not imply that the whole organization can work with European activities. Cities who are not that experienced with European activities often replied that they believe that the staff is qualified enough, but that the incentives and motivations are lacking. A similar observation can be made for the shared opinion that European activities are beneficial for the organization. All the respondents that were interviewed answered in a more or less similar way: “yes, European activities can be very useful, but it is questionable if the entire organization thinks like this”. For instance, a civil servant working on waste processing is not involved with European activities, whereas those involved with environmental issues are concerned with Europe almost all the time. As a result, with

both the qualities of staff, as well as with whether European activities are useful, a bit more prudence is required. Later on, in the discussion of the individual factors, this will be discussed and explained in more detail.

With these three general observations in mind, the level of Europeanization from section 4.1 can now be connected with the insights from the interviews offering an overview per factor. The overview above offers insight in how individual municipalities are scoring regarding the factors contributing to European activities. The aim of this thesis is however to discover a general pattern for G4 and G40 cities. Therefore, the table above can be used to translate the activities per level of Europeanization. The minor-modest-mature categorization is used for this. This also allows us to make the findings of this thesis representative for all the G40 cities.

Because we are looking at the embeddedness of European activities in municipalities, it makes little sense to uphold the rigid separation between G4 and G40 cities, as they are all cities who deal with the challenges and opportunities of Europeanization in more or less the same way. Obviously, all G4 cities belong to the highest level of European activities, the mature category. With the table below in hand, we can discuss which factors explain the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 cities. The interviews with the respondents can be used as illustration, underscoring the observations made per category of Europeanization.

	Aims & ambitions	Contacts	Talent & time	Institutions	Empathy & Expectations
Minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No ambition to become active on European activities. - No policy plans or ambitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - None to Barely any. - No leadership taken on European activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. Little to no experience. When there is experience, it is more of coincidence and on a very individual level. - No FTEs available specifically referring to European activities. - Size: the municipality is incapable to deal with the activities itself and requires strategic collaboration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rules and regulations are regarded as too complex and complicate – help from the outside is required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European activities are regarded as useful, but they are not used and there is little experience.
Modest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a motivation to be/become active on European matters. - There are policy plans that should embed European activities in the city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The amount of contacts is sufficient, but there is room for improvement. - There is leadership through the political representative and/or through the European officer/administration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience is growing within the organization. - There is room for European activities and this is recognized. - Size: there is active connection with strategic partners to make cities work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rules and procedure are regarded as ok. Practice makes perfect is the motto that best summarizes this group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European activities are regarded as essential means to achieve policy goals. Useful.
Mature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Europe is part of the core activities – motivated. - There is a structural plan that is continuously evaluated and improved regarding European activities. There is a good overview of the activities and the results they bring about. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The amount of contacts is maximum and is continuously managed. - Political and administrative leadership on European activities is visible all over the organization. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enough experience with European activities. - European activities are essential and thus enough FTEs are available. - Size: all available means are present, and the city is large enough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nothing to mention here. Cities know how the rules and procedure work and if it does not work for them, they will try to affect it through lobbying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European activities are essential for achieving local policy goals. - Crucial and part of regular activities.

4.2.1 Aims and ambitions

The first factor from the ACTIE model are the aims and ambitions to become involved in European activities. These aims and ambitions have been operationalized through two indicators: the motivation of cities to become involved in Europe and the concrete policy documents or actions that have been set out for the organization.

Regarding the motivations, five motivations to engage with Europe were derived from the research of Wolffhardt et al. (2005): problem solving, image, threat, alternative and duty. When examining the result from the interviews, four out of the five motivations were found. The only motivation that was not found was the 'Europe as a threat' motivation. Recall that this 'Europe as a threat' involves the perception that Europe forms a threat from the outside for local cultural expressions, which generates a sort of counter-action by the city to deal with this undesirable influence. This motivation was not found the way Wolffhardt et al. intended it. What was found however was that Europe is perceived as something distant and remote where the city should not be involved in. In Amersfoort for instance, some of the local opposition parties have made remarks on what the benefit of Europe is for the city: "We have all sort of local problems to deal with and the city is going to Brussels. Solve those local problems first!" (Respondent city of Amersfoort, 31-5-2018). However, if we follow this line of reasoning, arguments like this would lead to inactivity instead of becoming more engaged with European activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that the motivation to become active in Europe because 'it is a threat' has not been found.

The remaining four motivations have been used in a variety of ways. All the cities that were interviewed in this research mentioned that European activities can be used as a way to solve problems. By connecting European activities with local problems or challenges, Europe can fill a gap, whether this is financially or knowledge-wise. This is an observation made in section 4.1 already, that the need to connect Europe with local themes is an important way to make use of Europe. That cities use this as their primary motivation is thus confirmed. All of the respondents mentioned this as the primary motivation. Even those who were not scoring high on Europeanization recognized this as a potentially valuable reason to become active in European activities.

Most of the cities are aware of the way Europe can also be used as an image. Once the city is strongly integrated with European activities in their own organization, there are often ambitions to profile oneself on certain thematic priorities that find resonance within the own organization. Once the city has some agreement within the organization and the political management, the usage of Europe as a way to promote the city as a brand or through a certain theme becomes interesting. A number of examples can be given. The city of Nijmegen for instance has thematic priorities on sustainability and environment and within this image, they obtained the title of European Green Capital of 2018 (Respondent Brussels Office Arnhem & Nijmegen, 1-6-2018). Such a title is not only good for branding the city, but also to attract visitors, conferences and activities in the city. But also, more internationally known images are used to connect to European activities. The city of The Hague for instance, is internationally known for The International Criminal Court and United Nations Tribunals (Respondent City of The Hague, 23-5-2018). This gave the city an image of the city of Peace and Law, which is also used to bring focus in attracting and obtaining European activities. A third example is the City of Schiedam, where European activities are used to bend the negative image

the city had historically (Respondent City of Schiedam, 4-6-2018). “By using European activities as a way to profile the city more positively, we can actually do something about this negative image and bring the more positive developments of the city to the fore”.

The two remaining motivations mainly address to the mature category, and more specifically to the G4 cities. Starting with the ‘Europe as an alternative’ motivation, which was defined here as a way to escape the domestic context, because it was undesirable has been mentioned once. The respondent from the City of The Hague (23-5-2018) explained this motivation clearly. “The structural funds are controlled and divided by the national government. Cities are annoyed by the fact that these funds are not automatically reserved for them, which was a major motivation for cities to go and secure these funds in Brussels themselves”.

Europe is predominantly seen as duty by the larger cities of the G4, their size and the importance of economic interactions abroad allows them to have a strong consciousness that the European interrelations affect them and that they can affect European processes. The respondent from the City of Rotterdam for instance, stressed the simple fact that Rotterdam is the biggest port of Europe. “To benefit from all the connections, funding and discussions on port activities, we simply have to be present in Europe. Especially our challenge towards becoming ‘the sustainable harbor’ has a lot to do with the European Union, where these kinds of themes simply attract a lot of attention. That’s the point where you want to have something to say and express your stance on matters”.

Whereas these motivations might always be around, even when there are no concrete activities to mention, the actual difference in aims and ambitions is made by translating them into an actual plan for the political-administrative system of the city. The second indicator is therefore whether cities have concretized their motivation into an actual plan for action. The connection between the two allows us to discuss how aims and ambitions are reflected per level of Europeanization.

For those cities with a minor level Europeanization, we can argue that there is no motivation to become active in European activities in the first place. Or at least, these motivations might be present, but they have not been placed on the agenda nor are turned into steps to concretize the motivations. This implies that there are no policy plans or concrete measures taken to make a serious step towards institutionalizing European activities in the city. There is no or barely any connection between the local challenges and how European activities can be useful in solving this.

The city of Zoetermeer and Almere are suitable examples of this. As a member of the Metropole Region Rotterdam-The Hague Zoetermeer is strategically positioned between the two cities (Respondent City of Zoetermeer, 6-6-2018). As a New Town, it is offered considerable possibilities to grow, which it made use of the last couple of decades. This means that the city does not really have to look any further than the Metropole Region to obtain funds to finance new projects or activities. The city of Almere is a similar example, which as a New Town and part of the Metropole Region of Amsterdam, obtained a similar position (Respondent City of Almere, 27-6-2018).

Within the modest level of Europeanization, there is a motivation to become active and this is translated into an actual plan or strategy. The people working in the political-administrative organization of the city are aware of the usefulness of Europe and believe that this should be translated into concrete actions. In fact, this motivation is already expressed in actual policy documents. It is intended to make the connection between the thematic priorities of the city and the way in which European means can play a part in reaching these goals. While this is not perfect and part of a continuous process, there is a drive to do so and develop it over time. The cities of Zwolle and Tilburg are therein quite similar as they both started their Europeanization agenda four years ago during the previous coalitions (Respondent City of Zwolle, 25-6-2018; Respondent City of Tilburg, 5-6-2018). Both cities prioritized being present in the Europe theme group of the G40 as an important way to proliferate their European activities.

For the cities who are at a mature level of Europeanization, the motivation is omnipresent and shared by people all over the organization. The policy plans on European activities have been around for some time and have been evaluated and improved over time. There is a good overview of the activities and the results they bring about. Cities in this category have become experienced in connecting European activities with local priorities and thematic targets.

4.2.2 Contacts

The second factor explaining the engagement of cities in European activities is contacts. Within this contacts factor, two elements have been defined. Firstly, the social capital of the municipality, which is understood by the following indicator: the connection the municipality has with relevant actors outside their own organization, or their so-called social capital. The second indicator is the expression of leadership on Europeanization. Here both the role of political-administrative figureheads are an important expression of promoting Europeanization.

When we couple these two indicators with the different levels of Europeanization the following pattern arises with regards to the contacts cities have. There is no coherent overview of European contacts. As the European activities are not monitored, or barely monitored, the number of contacts remains limited. The respondents who are positioned in this category however argue that they think that when required, they are able to find the right people. This is however often very superficial, such as getting in contact with the VNG or Europa Decentraal in case they need help or support. The information that can be obtained from these contacts is thereby limited. An example of limited European contacts is expressed in the answers. The respondent from Zaanstad for instance: "I think that we can find the right persons, in case that we want to find them. The contacts are not active so to say, but in case we need them, we can probably find them".

Leadership on European activities is absent for cities with a minor level of Europeanization. European activities require leadership from people in important positions in the political-administrative system. When no such thing is present, the European activities also remain highly underdeveloped. This leadership can be a key element in the Europeanization of cities. When cities have an ill-defined European

strategy, this implies that cities are vulnerable for changes in the people working in the political-administrative organization of the city.

The modest level of Europeanization shows a more integrated pattern of activities between the number and quality of contacts and the role played by people in the political-administrative organization. Since the city expressed the ambition to do more on European activities, expanding contacts on relevant thematic priorities is certainly part of this. The specially assigned European coordinator or staff has this expansion of contacts as one of its tasks. Therefore, this staff is already showing a lot of leadership in promoting European activities in the organization. Often however, this staff member is backed up or led by a political leader, such as an alderman, who is also Europe-minded. A couple of respondents mentioned the way European leadership can be beneficial to allow European activities to trickle down into the organization (Respondent City of Breda, 8-6-2018; Representative City of Schiedam, 4-6-2018). "Promoting European activities is like an oil spill that slowly affects other parts of the organization" (Respondent City of Tilburg, 5-6-2018).

With regards to the mature level of Europeanization, the quality and amount of contacts is well-maintained and is perfectly capable to serve the thematic priorities of the political-administrative system. Since European activities have been on the agenda for a couple of years, whereby the number of contacts grew over time with each activity that cities participated in. The contacts are no longer only on an individual basis but became institutionalized in the team working on European activities as well as within the thematic departments of the organization.

With regards to leadership, this is present at multiple levels in the organization. Not only the figureheads in the political-administrative system, but also those who have had positive experiences with European activities are helpful in taking up a leadership role in promoting the results and continuation of similar activities.

Cities are aware that leadership in this mature level of Europeanization has an important symbolic role. Moreover, the usage of an alderman or mayor in thematic priorities is vital in European networks. Therefore, leadership is crucial to use strategically, along the thematic priorities of the cities. Mayor Aboutaleb is such a figurehead for the city of Rotterdam in Europe. As a good public speaker and backed up by a city that is internationally praised for their potential on becoming the sustainable port of the world, Aboutaleb is a welcomed speaker in conferences and during events. "That is the kind of leadership that is visible in the own organization, in the city and all over Europe that put Rotterdam as a whole in the limelight of attention" (Representative City of Rotterdam, 27-6-2018).

4.2.3 Talents and time

The third factor is talents and time, by which the ability to create a capable administrative structure for dealing with European activities is meant (Wolffhardt et al. 2005). Three indicators are of concern in this factor. Firstly, is there sufficient personnel working on European activities. Secondly, whether the staff is qualified enough to be involved in European activities. And finally, whether the capacity of the city is big enough in size to benefit from European activities. When these indicators are matched with the levels of Europeanization, the following observations can be made.

With regards to the minor level of Europeanization, there are no specific positions concerned with European activities. This means that there is not enough time for people to work on European activities. This becomes problematic when there has to be applied for European subsidy procedures. "These procedures for European subsidies easily take three to four years to be finalized. It is therein uncertain that those people who apply for the subsidy will still work in the organization after four years. When there is experience on these kinds of subsidies this is easily replaced, but when these are the first steps, it is precarious" (Respondent City of Zaanstad, 26-6-2018).

Moreover, people are often not competent enough to be involved in European activities when this is needed. Due to the lack of knowledge about the procedures, there are often start-up costs involved for consultants or external parties that assist during these procedures. This is an additional barrier to engage with Europe (Respondent City of Alkmaar, 28-6-2018). "The start-up costs for a European project can easily become 20.000 euros, while this is reimbursed when the subsidy is successfully obtained, it is still an investment that people here should be willing to take (Respondent City of Zaanstad, 26-6-2018)". Moreover, when people are confronted with taking up European activities for the first time, two additional and very personal barriers were mentioned, namely the inability to properly speak English and the unwillingness to travel (Respondent city of Schiedam, 4-6-2018).

This financial burden to engage with European activities is something closely related to the size of the city. This is the relationship Wolffhardt et al. 2005) explained in the following way: "the relationship between the size of potential gains (or constraints) and the size of a city, mirrored in the capacities of its political-administrative system, can co-determine whether a city embarks on EU-related activities, and if yes, on which sort of engagement". Logically, a G4 city with a much larger population and organization is much more capable to engage in European activities, both in terms of capacity as well as with regards to the knowledge which is already present among the staff.

For the modest level of Europeanization, talents and time regarding European activities are recognized as important elements in making the Europeanization of the city function properly. This does not mean that it is perfect right away. For the first indicator, this means that there is an ambition to expand the number of European activities and this is reflected in the number of people who have experience with European projects. The ambition is to actively support people in using European means for their thematic areas.

The number of staff working on European activities is sufficient to get started or organize the European activities. However, this does not imply that it is enough to do all the work. Specially to popularize the idea of European activities in the organization it is always useful to have more people working on European matters. Therefore, the answer "the number of people for European activities can always be more" was often heard (Respondent city of Amersfoort, 31-5-2018; Respondents City of Hilversum, 21-6-2018; Respondent city of Zwolle, 25-6-2018; Respondent City of Zaanstad, 26-6-2018; Respondent City of Almere, 28-6-2018).

The mature level of Europeanization has talents, time and enough FTEs all over. The high level of activity of city on European matters has had a positive impact on the amount of qualified personnel working on European activities. Of course, not everyone

in the organization has European experience, but people working in positions that are related to the thematic priorities of the city in Europe are experienced and know their ways in European activities. The G4 cities all have their own offices with sufficient people to make specialization possible.

Lastly, the capacity to be involved in European activities in relation with their size is embraced as sufficient and challenged seldom. People have the idea that their municipality can use European matters in an effective way. However, often they share the burden with regional partners (G40). G4 municipalities have their own offices, making European activities part of their internal structure.

4.2.4 Institutions

The fourth factor is the institutions that have an effect on the Europeanization of cities. As mentioned before in the discussion of the results per city in section 4.1 these institutions are more or less similar for all the cities. Following the work of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) the emphasis here is on the constitutional arrangements, domestic laws and domestic politics. Two indicators have been taken to reflect this broad factor of institutions: firstly, whether the rules and procedures in the Netherlands are beneficial for enhancing European activities. And secondly, whether the procedures are open and understandable enough to work with.

Starting with the former, a lot of effort is currently being made to improve listening to cities in a European policy-making context. As mentioned in the introduction of this investigation, the Urban Agenda for the EU was an important priority of the Netherlands during their European presidency in 2016. These efforts were made because the general argument is that the role of cities is growing in a European context and their voice should be heard. This resulted in 12 thematic priorities, where cities could sign up for. Ultimately, in December 2018 these themes will be evaluated and discussed. The expectation is that these insights will improve the position of cities even more in the future. Thus, institution-wise cities are increasingly heard, and their points are taken into consideration for future improvements.

The second indicator on institutions is whether the procedures are open and understandable for cities. Whereas the first indicator was more or less a general story, this indicator differs per level of Europeanization. For the minor level of Europeanization, the roles and procedures of Europe are complex and almost like a maze where directions are unclear. Often, they require advice from the outside as they have no staff who knows these directions. As mentioned above already, the inexperienced municipalities hire advisory consultants to help them with the rules and activities of the procedures (Respondent city of Zaanstad, 26-6-2018).

The modest level of Europeanization also has an average understanding on understanding how the procedures and openness of Europe works. There is a proper roadmap that is helpful in finding the directions in Europe. These directions are in close connection with the thematic priorities the cities have. By focusing only on the relevant programs and projects, Europe is kept understandable for the cities political-administrative structure. Lastly, for cities with a mature level of Europeanization the European landscape is well-known and thematic connections that have been made over time offered a good insight in the procedures. Often their previous experiences allow them to engage with networks and projects more easily.

4.2.5 Expectations and Empathy

The final factor derived from the ACTIE framework are expectations and empathy. Two indicators were discerned for this factor. Firstly, whether there is a perception that European activities bring about a change in the city. Secondly, whether there is a shared belief that European activities are helpful.

For cities with a minor level of Europeanization, European activities are often regarded as remote and distant institutions that require enormous efforts to become involved in. Since the organization is not oriented on these kind of activities, the people working within the organization logically have a lower expectation that Europe is useful. This is partly because there is a weak or no connection at all with the issues and ambitions that are at stake locally.

For cities in the modest level of Europeanization, the metaphor of an oil spill can be helpful to imagine how people working within the political-administrative organization. The ambitions of the city bring people into contact with European ways of working, logically these new experiences have an impact on the perception of people about the usefulness of European means to meet local ambitions.

For cities with a mature level of Europeanization the empathy and expectations on European activities are both high. The staff working within the organization is experienced and knows how to deal with European means as a supplement for local aims and ambitions. Logically, the staff is also positive and realizes that European activities are essential for the city to meet their ambitions.

4.2.6 Interrelations between the factors for European participation of cities

In the previous sections, all the factors from the ACTIE framework were discussed more or less in isolation from each other. Not all the factors weigh equally in explaining the level of Europeanization of cities. In fact, it is possible to identify a first order of factors, those who are crucial to initiate Europeanization, and a set of second order factors, which are less important but still required to initiate European activities. Bearing this in mind, this section summarizes the individual findings from above by explaining how the factors of Europeanization interrelate and influence one another. It will do so by explaining the model below step by step. This relation is then used as an explanation for which factors explain the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 cities.

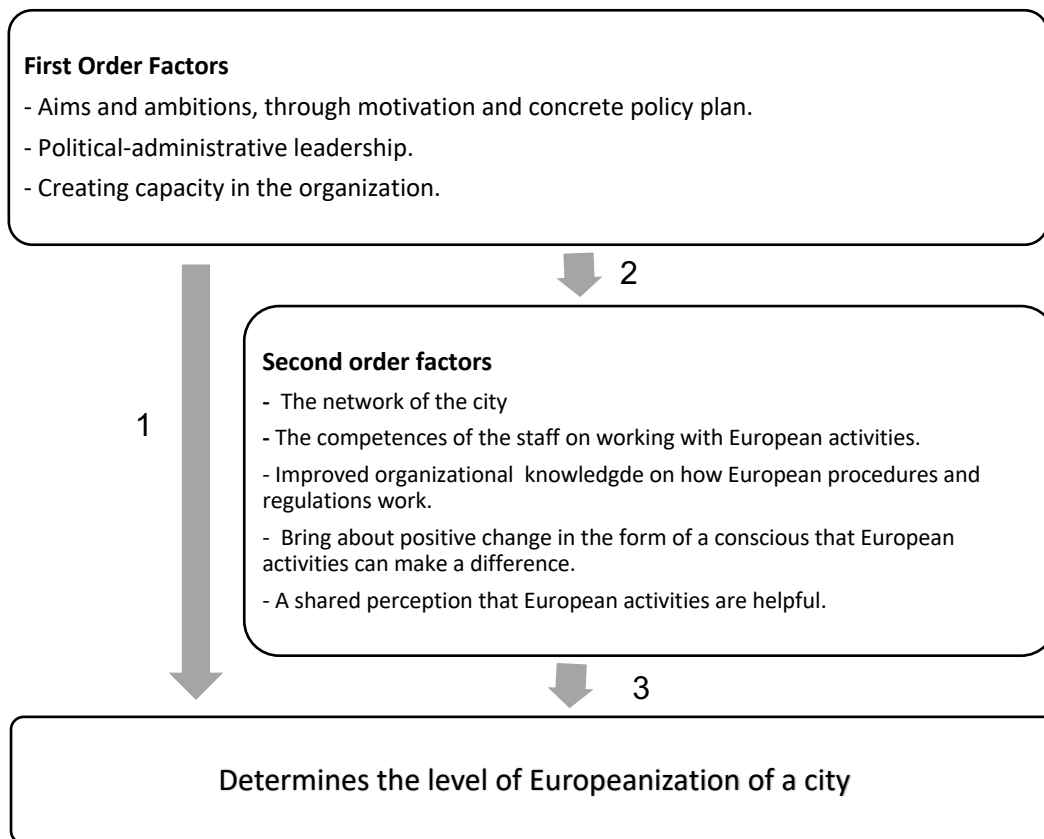


Figure 5 Interrelationship between first and second order factors of Europeanization

The model above explains the relationships between the different factors and the independent variable. The first relationship is that the first order factors of aims and ambitions, leadership in the political-administrative organization and the creation of sufficient capacity in the organization, which have a direct influence on the level of Europeanization of a G4 and G40 city. This means that the Contacts factor is not observable as a whole but is split up: leadership is an important first order influence, whereas the social capital of the city is more of a second order influence. Moreover, the Talents and time factor is also separable in a first order and a second order factor, which is the amount of personnel working with European activities.

Europeanization of cities originates through a close connection of three factors: contacts, in the form of leadership and the suitable networks, the aims and ambitions and the capacity to deal with European activities in the organization of the city. The first factor that appears to be crucial in setting up and maintaining Europeanization is leadership. As part of the contacts factor, the willingness to become active in European activities starts with important people working in the political-administrative sphere of a city, who have enough influence to put European activities on the agenda of the city's priorities. The other indicator for contacts, the social capital of people working within the organization with people outside the organization is thereby also crucial as it paves directions into the complex European landscape.

When this political-administrative leadership is present in the organization of the city, this goes hand in hand with a certain motivation to become involved with European activities. In general, the results show that four main motivations have been observed.

These are using European means for solving local problems, using Europe for image-building, using Europe as a duty and lastly using Europe as an alternative.

Political-administrative leadership and the motivations they come forth with are important, but to actually embed them into the organization, they have to be turned into a concrete plan that solidifies organizational capacity for European activities. It is important that for Europeanization to actually work well, that they get out of people's heads and are being converted into concrete actions that can be shared among the people working within the organization of the city.

These three factors are crucial for embedding Europeanization in the political-administrative organization of the city. As was noticed in section 4.1 already, Europeanization is a maturing process that takes time to develop and progress. The connection of aims and ambitions, political-administrative leadership and talents and time are a crucial starting point to allow this institutionalization of European activities to take place. When these three factors have been thought about in coherent way and the right kind of steps are taken, the remaining factors come into the picture.

It is worthwhile to briefly discuss what happens when one of the links in this chain of three key factors is absent. Firstly, when motivation is absent, there is no initiative at all to become active, resulting in no Europeanization taking place at all. The city is too remote from European activities and there is no impetus to become active at all. This motivation should then be concretized in a policy plan, meaning that there is a lack of overview how to deal with Europe and what the thematic priorities are. Secondly, the absence of leadership is harmful as there is no one in the political-administrative organization of the city who has the power to initiate European activities or prioritize them above other activities. Thirdly, when European activities are not concretely expressed in the factor of talent and time, through competences and capacity, European activities cannot be dealt with either.

The second relationship is the influence of first order factors on second order factors. These second order factors have been used in this investigation and what is found is that these factors are positively influenced by the first order factors. Once the first order factors have been implemented in the political-administrative organization, they will positively influence the remaining factors from the ACTIE model. These involve institutional factors, such as the understandability of procedures, and the expectations and empathy of working with European activities. Such as the expectation that they bring about a change in the city and the shared belief that European activities are helpful in solving local challenges and ambitions.

The third relationship is the influence of the second order factors on Europeanization. When these second order factors improve, it is observed that Europeanization will likely benefit from this as well. The improved competences of the staff working with European activities and the improved organization knowledge are concrete elements of an improved way of working with European activities and thus Europeanization. Moreover, the positive changes that European activities bring about in the city as well as a shared perception that European activities are helpful, shows that the city is becoming more Europeanized, both in thinking and in actions.

Now that these three relationships have been discussed, it is important to reflect on two remaining elements: firstly, the development of the factors over time and the influence of size. The first and second order factors have an immediate influence of the Europeanization of cities, but when cities Europeanize, these factors appear to be developing with this level of Europeanization as well. Because this was not part of this inquiry here, the observation should be made carefully. It is expected that with a more matured level of Europeanization, the first and second order factors mature and become positively influenced as well. For instance, the aims and ambitions become more ambitious when Europeanization appears to be successful, the political-administrative leadership becomes more active and ambitious and the capacity for European activities might also be expanded over time.

With regards to the second order factors a similar observation can be made: with a more matured level of Europeanization these factors are expected to improve as well. For example, the competences of the staff improve due to the experience they gain by actually doing European projects, the organization's knowledge as a whole improves, making it more capable to engage with European activities in the future. Moreover, more maturity on Europeanization also enhances the consciousness and the overall opinion that Europe is both making a difference and helpful in dealing with new issues. However, it is important to stress that this was not part of the investigation here, but it is something that appears likely.

The influence of the size of the city is the second factor that requires some special attention. In this thesis, it was incorporated as part of the talents and time factor in the ACTIE model. Wolffhardt et al. (2005) explained it as the relationship between the size of the potential gains and the size of the city, in the form of organizational capacity. In this research, this clear relationship between size and organizational capacity was not explicitly found. Of course, G4 cities have a much larger share in European activities, allowing them to have reached a matured level of Europeanization much earlier. But as the research also showed, through strategic collaboration, the size of the city does not really matter anymore.

In sum, section 4.2 dealt with the question which factors explain the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 cities. By using the ACTIE model, each factor that could potentially explain why cities are engaging with European activities has been discussed individually. From this individual analysis, it became possible to generate an interrelated between the individual patterns. Therein three factors (first order factors) are regarded as crucial for initiating Europeanization in cities: setting aims and ambitions in the form of a motivation to be active, in combination with an actual concrete plan on how to use European means. This has to be converted in actual organizational capacity. Political-administrative leadership is required to create this room for European activities within the organization. When these factors are thought off and concretized properly, they form the primary influence of the Europeanization of cities. These first order factors also positively affect the remaining factors (second order factors). The competences of the staff will likely improve, and so will the organizational knowledge on European rules and procedures. Moreover, actual projects and activities make an observable difference in the city. In general, the opinion about European activities in the political-administrative organization will become more positive when the effects and results of European activities are monitored and

evaluated on a structural basis. Lastly, the second order factors also influence the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 cities albeit less strongly.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of the findings

There is an undeniable trend at the moment that is positioning cities in the limelight of attention when it comes to policy-making and problem-solving in the European Union. Cities are expected to bring a lot of innovative policy-making and policy-solving potential that is beneficial for the proper functioning of the European Union. The further decentralization and the broadening of actors influencing public policy-making are important drivers of this new transition, making interactions among actors inevitable to come up with effective policies (Goldsmith, 2003; De Rooij, 2002). Whereas these new incentives to redesign the European Union towards a more decentralized and city-centered focus, it appears to be a significant challenge for cities to effectively deal with this expanded role. The enormous range of opportunities available for cities to deal with European activities in one way or another, is placing an enormous burden on cities who have little to no experience with Europe as an organization.

The growing emphasis on the role of cities comes at a price however. This new emphasis on cities can only work when cities collectively engage into European activities (Røiseland & Vabo, 2016). Currently, the expectation in this new role for cities is that they will automatically 'see the light' to become motivated and engaged with European policy-making and programs. The complexity of this challenge is therein often ignored. As became apparent before and within this investigation, there is still a lot of uncertainty about what drives cities to become active in European activities in the first place. As there is a lot of difference in the extent to which cities are involved, this is an important issue to investigate. This research focused precisely on this practical and theoretical gap, by trying to obtain a better insight in how Europeanization of cities look like. A relevant place to do such an inquiry is the Netherlands, for three reasons. Firstly, the Dutch government pushed for an Urban Agenda for the EU in 2016, emphasizing the role of cities in the European Union. Secondly, the Netherlands is highly urbanized, with over 90.5 percent of the population living in cities (ROB, 2013). Closely related to this, the Netherlands has a highly decentralized system of public decision-making, allowing cities to have the freedom to align actions with their own local needs.

This emphasis on the role of cities by the Dutch government is ambitious, but it is also questionable whether cities will actually follow up this involvement with European activities in practice. When cities are offered the space to maneuver in a decentralized system as the Netherlands, the rationale behind their actions becomes important to understand how Europeanized they are. Therefore, the following research question was posed: what is the level of Europeanization of Dutch G4 and G40 cities? G4 and G40 cities were chosen as a starting point for inquiry, as these 44 cities were the largest cities in the Netherlands who are expected to deal with Europeanization one way or another. Moreover, this research was done in collaboration with Platform31, who has the G4 and G40 cities as their partners.

This general research question has been divided into two sub questions. The first question is: to what extent is Europeanization taking place in G4 and G40 cities? With this question, this research was less interested in what kind of activities individual cities were involved in. The theoretical representations that were derived from the literature

already offered a good overview of how cities can be active in European activities, such as through networking, lobbying and advising, obtaining subsidies and gathering information (John, 2001). This research assumes that when cities Europeanize, they are involved in a combination of these kind of activities. The focus of this investigation was thereby not to filter out which city is doing what, but to get a more general overview how Europeanization is playing a role in the political-administrative organization of the city. With this shift in focus, a more general overview of Europeanization among G4 and G40 cities can be generated, thereby focusing on what they have in common, instead of the specific activities they are involved in.

As this investigation started with a separation of G40 cities into active and inactive cities, based on the Europe theme group of the G40, it was first required to bring more nuance to this separation. This separation was made to obtain a sample out of the 44 cities, as it was too time consuming for this inquiry to interview all of the city representatives. The categorization made on Europe theme group activity appeared to be ineffective in two ways: firstly, it deals with rather general city subjects, which makes it very difficult to have a thematic focus that is connectable with the themes at stake at the local level of individual cities. Secondly, the G4 and G40 networks are just one of the many ways in which cities can strategically pursue European activities. Activity or inactivity in this theme group was thus too limited to determine whether cities are active in Europe in general.

The new categorization that this inquiry came up with resolves around embeddedness of European activities in the political-administrative organization. This is visualized as a spectrum, where on one end there is no European activity embedded in the organization, whereas on the other hand, European activity is a matured element in the organization of the city. In between is a large variation of activity. This level of institutionalization is based on three factors: whether there is an actual policy plan on European activities, whether there is someone assigned with European activities and whether these activities have sustained over two or more coalition periods.

Following this continuum of embeddedness of Europeanization, three concrete categories have been discerned: minor, modest and mature. The minor level of Europeanization involves cities who perceive European activities as being unimportant and insignificant for their daily operations. The second level is the modest level of Europeanization, where European activities might be still somewhat limited but are nonetheless becoming a growing ambition of the city to deal with in the future. This is expressed in an ambitious policy plan as well as in having assigned a staff position on European activities. The last level of Europeanization is mature. The city therein reached a coherent strategy for European activities as the people assigned to European activities as well as the plan is well thought about and is constantly developing over time.

This renewed operationalization offers a good overview of how the G4 and G40 cities score on the level of Europeanization. As a result of this categorization on the basis of institutionalization of European activities, the strict boundaries set at the start between G4 and G40 cities is also blurring. Since both groups consist of cities, it makes little sense to keep talking about them separately, as they all have a political-administrative organization that at a certain point in time deals with how to embed Europeanization into the organization. Logically, for G4 cities, the set-up of European activities took

place years ago, meaning that all of them have a well-developed and matured European policy that is supported and executed by people from all over the organization. For G40 cities, the way Europeanization is embedded in the organization is a challenge at the moment. Whereas there are a number of matured G40 cities, the majority of cities have to deal with it now as a concrete challenge, thereby weighing the costs and benefits. The complex multilevel governance system that the European Union is at the moment therein offers both opportunities, but also challenges, as it is difficult for cities at the start of their European activities to find the right connections with their local priorities.

To get more insight in how this challenge of Europeanization is taking place in the individual organizations of cities a second sub question was posed. Section 4.2 questioned which factors explain the level of Europeanization of G4 and G40 cities. Now that we have learned how cities are involved in European activities, the underlying motives to do so need to be clarified. The level of Europeanization discussed earlier in section 4.1 can now be used to get a general understanding of how the different levels of activity are influenced by factors to engage with European activities. By using the ACTIE model, where Aims and Ambitions, Contacts, Talents and Time, Institutions and Empathy and Expectations were discerned, the possible factors that could be at stake could be analyzed, first separately and then the interrelations between them.

Whereas the analysis of the individual factors offered a good starting point on what factors influence the Europeanization of cities, an overall explanation can be generated that offers fruitful insights. In section 4.2.6 these interrelations were discussed. The factors can be divided into first order and second order factors that explain the level of Europeanization. The first order factors are the close connection between the aims and ambitions, expressed in the motivation of cities in combination with a concrete policy document, in combination with the ability to convert these ambitions into actual capacity in the political-administrative organization. Lastly, leadership in the political-administrative organization is crucial to actually convert European ambitions in the organization. These first order factors are therein crucial to set up a proper structure to Europeanize the city over time.

The second order factors are directly influenced by the first order factors. Whereas the first order factors lay down a fundament for the initiation of Europeanization, the second order factors are able to build on top of this fundament. The network of the city on European activities, the competences of people working within the organization and the overall level of knowledge on how European procedures work all positively benefit from the first order factors. Also, more abstract factors, such as the overall opinion about European activities positively improves.

But these second order factors are of course also beneficial for the level of Europeanization of the city. The second order factors are not as important as the first order factors but are definitely required to Europeanize the political-administrative organization of the city. The improvement of second order factors in the organization, positively influence the level of Europeanization. They can be perceived as a more positive attitude towards being engaging with European activities. Also, the general experience on European matters improves over time, making Europeanization a more structurally embedded trajectory for the political-administrative organization of the city.

These insights tell us that the Europeanization of cities is not coming about by itself. This thesis started with the general trend nowadays that cities are in the limelight of attention and that their involvement is almost automatically expected. This thesis showed that this is not the case and that Europeanization requires a structural basis in individual political-administrative organizations of cities to properly develop over time. Every city did at least something with European activities, only they differ enormously in how seriously these activities are positioned in the political-administrative organization of cities. Europeanization requires continuous and structural attention of cities to make it function properly and make it a long-lasting activity on their agendas.

Thus far, there is no recognition at all that initiating European activities for unexperienced cities is a significant challenge where assistance can be beneficial, to take the right actions in setting up an effective European agenda over time. The mature cities have all turned European activities into a structural part of their political-administrative policy. Over time, this means that the city becomes completely path dependent on using European activities as a fundamental part of their local ambitions. If the minor and modest cities want to reach a similar level of maturity, a perception that is currently developing within the European Union, assistance for cities is required to deal with the complex start-up phase of Europeanization. There are a lot of challenges in practice. The individual struggle of cities to Europeanize their local agenda, to align their thematic priorities with the right European means is a complex activity. Therefore, it is important to stress that the increasing attention for cities is a good development in itself, but mechanisms have to be developed to actually support cities in catching up with the range of new European options they have at their disposal.

5.2 Potential Theoretical Contributions and Further Research

The theoretical relevance stated in the introduction are useful to review now. The first point stressed there is the limited understanding of why cities engage with Europe in the first place. Most of the literature on Europeanization assumes that cities will be active, but the practice tells us that this is not the case. Europeanization is a difficult process that requires maturity to become effectively implemented into the political-administrative organization of cities. Wolffhardt et al. (2005) made a first and so far as known the only attempt to get a better understanding of what factors are playing a role for cities in reaching a certain level of Europeanization. From the results generated in this thesis, it appears that their results were rather limited. According to Wolffhardt et al. (2005) motivation in itself is key to initiate Europeanization. This thesis came up with a more coherent first order set of factors, namely that aims and ambitions have to be incorporated through motivation and a concrete policy plan to start with embedding Europeanization into the political-administration of the organization. In addition, the influence of political-administrative leadership and the ability to create organizational capacity are equally important for cities. It can thus be argued that the limited understanding on what factors influence Europeanization of cities is significantly improved.

The second point mentioned in the introduction was that the theories on Europeanization were of limited use to understand the practical situation. This research appeared to be a good example of this. Because Europeanization is so complex and a lot of activities can be used in a wide variety of ways, these specific activities were not useful here. The case study under investigation has a total of 44 cities, whereby

filtering out individual activities of cities will therefore not be an effective analysis. The focus on embeddedness of these activities in general, accepting the wide range of activities that concern Europeanization, appeared to be more useful to obtain an understanding of the situation. Beyond the confines of this research, this categorization of Europeanization on embedded of activities can also be helpful to better understand the situation in other European countries.

The third point is the inquiry on which factors influence Europeanization. In order to do this effectively, and thereby supplement the work of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) through this investigation. The work of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) appeared to be a bit limited when examining the factors of importance regarding Europeanization. Through the usage of the ACTIE model, derived from the participation literature, the results of the investigation offered a different and more coherent view than the one of Wolffhardt et al. (2005). The first order factors generated through the ACTIE model are much more inclusive than the model of Wolffhardt et al. (2005) suggests. While they suggest that only motivation is important and that from there Europeanization will take shape, this investigation sees multiple complementary factors of influence. These first order factors are motivation expressed in a concrete policy plan, political-administrative leadership and creating organizational capacity. The participation literature thus gave crucial insights into which factors influence Europeanization of cities.

These three points of relevance lead to the discussion of further research. As this thesis showed, there is still a lot of uncertainty about how Europeanization comes about at the local, organizational level of cities. In theory, there is a macro-level understanding of how Europe influences cities and vice versa, but to zoom into the concrete practical challenges and motivations is still vague and undefined. This thesis tried to make a follow up of Wolffhardt et al.'s inquiry from 2005. Especially the focus on Europeanization as a process of embeddedness is a new development that has to be tested in other case studies in Europe. Moreover, the factors that contribute to Europeanization and especially the first and second order factor distinction requires testing in other case studies as well.

5.3 Reflecting on the research quality indicators

It is important however to discuss how these findings came about and what this means for the quality of the research. The best way to do so is by discussing the internal validity, the external validity and the reliability of this investigation. Starting with internal validity, this investigation made a couple of changes throughout the research that were necessary because the theory as well as the research approach did not match the actual situation. By focusing institutionalization of European activities, the level of Europeanization was more accurately reflected. While it is a more general argument than mapping how cities are active on Europe in accordance with the ladder of Europeanization, this matches the actual situation more accurately. Subsequently, finding the relevant factors for Europeanization along these categories was more successful as it matched the situation in practice. It therein made no sense to pin down cities on what they were actually doing, but to find a general pattern of how Europeanization looks like.

The second research quality indicator is the external validity. This concerns the question "whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context" (Bryman, 2012). As we made a sample out of the G4 and G40 cities,

the total number of 44 cities was reduced to 16 cities. This sample was divided by the activity in the theme group. While this categorization turned out to be ineffective in itself, it was still a good starting point for interviews as the cities at least had a varying pattern of European activities: some did a lot, some did nothing on European activities. As a result, I am convinced that the forthcoming level of Europeanization, which is perceived as a continuum of minor, modest and mature, can be applied on the other G40 cities in the Netherlands as well. The general and interrelated connection of factors that explain the level of Europeanization was observable time and again during the interviews. Thus, there is no doubt that these results can be generalized beyond the confines of this research.

The third research quality indicator is reliability, which concerns “the consistency and repeatability of the research procedures” (Yin, 2014: 240). Throughout the research, clear and well-elaborated steps have been taken to reach the methodology that is used in this inquiry. Every time a change in methodology was taken because it better served the practical situation, this came about as a result of proper argumentation for doing so. This means that the steps taken in the research have been made clear all the time, allowing researchers to repeat or use the methodology applied here again. Moreover, because the theory was not useful to analyze the practical situation, this investigation offers researchers a new methodology to analyze the level of Europeanization of cities.

5.4 Recommendations

As suggested in the introduction, this thesis also has projected practical relevance. The first point of practical relevance is that the investigation of the G4 and G40 in the Netherlands is a case study that can generate new insights into how cities Europeanize in practice. As it turned out, the practical situation was difficult to investigate and a lot of adjustments had to be made make it researchable. The literature on Europeanization is thereby not really practice-proof. The insights generated here are thus useful to understand and investigate other contexts as well.

The second point stated in the introduction is that this case allowed us to zoom in closely into the organizational challenges that cities face when dealing with Europeanization. At the moment, there is a gap between those cities on the minor level who struggle to get Europeanization into their daily organizational activities and those who are on a modest and mature level already. These latter groups of cities created a trajectory towards developing the use of European activities over time by designing a coherent plan. For minor cities, the biggest challenge is to kick-start Europeanization in their organization in a structural way. Only when this can be done, by organizing the first order factors of aims and ambitions, leadership and organizational capacity, a level of stability can be created. With this organizational stability, European activities will slowly mature from a loose set of activities into a widely supported policy for the city covering manifold themes and subjects. This is of course only possible when this level of organizational capacity on European activities can be maintained. It is thus essential within every political-administrative organization of cities to secure the first order factors first. Once again, these include: the motivation set out in a concrete plan, thereby reserving organization capacity. Lastly, leadership is vital to stress the importance of European activities.

When we examine the overall situation, there is currently no external actor who is able to assist cities who are in the minor category of Europeanization, to help them initiate their activities in a more structural way. When there is no motivation, leadership or organizational capacity for Europe, these cities are currently disregarded as potential actors in European activities. This means that Europeanization will not take place nor is any improvement possible in the situation. Therefore, a central actor should obtain a monitoring and advisory role towards these cities to help them with the complex challenge of Europeanization. In my opinion, this is the kind of expertise Platform31 is familiar with.

And this brings us to the final practical point of relevance: which is the recommendations to be made for Platform31. While an overall actor is currently missing who monitors and advises cities in dealing with Europeanization, Platform31 has this kind of role in many areas. However, when the organization of Platform31 is taken into consideration at the moment, there is a lot of improvement possible with regards to monitoring and advising on European matters. In my view, the situation at Platform31 is similar with the situation of cities who want to Europeanize. The first order factors stressed out to be crucial above, are also crucial for an organization as Platform31. First of all, a motivation is required to become active in Europe and expand the number of possibilities. At the moment, Platform31 is involved in the Europe theme group of the G40, as a partner in JPI Urban Europe and as the National Contact Point for URBACT. But European activities are poorly connected with the other activities of Platform31. There is currently a new motivation to 'do more with Europe' and this is similar to the way it works for cities towards Europeanization.

If this new motivation within the organization is not embedded through a concrete plan, where the aims and ambitions are made concretely, then it becomes difficult to actually improve the activities. Leadership is therein important: make the organizational decisions that are required, thereby implying to reserve enough capacity to actually initiate new European activities for Platform31 that can better link up with what cities and other partners desire and ask for. In my view, and what came to the fore from the interviews time and again, the exchange and communication of best practices from individual cities is something that is currently regarded as missing. Each city has to more or less invent the wheel itself with regards to Europeanization and how to organize these activities. Improvements in the exchange of information, such as major achievements of individual cities, as well as how cities dealt with their Europeanization challenge is crucial to share among each other. This information-sharing and communicating role is a potential role for Platform31. By doing so, the barriers towards Europeanization are reduced, communication is improved, and strategic collaboration also benefits considerably.

6 References

- Ansell, C. & Gash, A. (2007) Collaborative Governance in Theory and Practice, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, vol. 18, pp. 543-571.
- Alford, J. (2002) Why Do Public-Sector Clients Coproduce – Towards a Contingency Theory, *Administration & Society*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 32-56.
- Alford, J. & Yeates, S. (2015) Co-Production of Public Services in Australia: The Roles of Government Organizations and Co-Producers, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 75, no. 2, pp. 159-175.
- Babbie, E. (2013) *The Practice of Social Research*, 13th edition, Cengage Learning.
- Bache, I. (2005) Europeanization and Britain: Towards Multi-level Governance? *EUSA 9th Biennial Conference in Austin, Texas, March 31-April 2 2005*.
- Bache, I. (2012) Multi-level governance in the European Union, in: Levi-Faur, D. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 628-641.
- Börzel, T.A. & Risse, T. (2009) Conceptualizing the Domestic Impact of Europe, Prepared for Fetherstone/Radaelli (eds.) *The Politics of Europeanization*, pp. 1-23.
- Brodie, E. Cowling, E. Nissen, N. Paine, A.E. Jochum, V. Warburton, D. (2009) *Understanding Participation: A Literature Review*, Pathways through participation project, December 2009.
- Bryman (2012) *Social Research Methods*, 4th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Callanan, M. (2012) Domestic governance arrangements and Europeanization: The case of central-local relations in England, Ireland and Denmark, *Comparative European Politics*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 399-420.
- Daley, D.M. Sharp, E.B. Bae, J. (2013) Understanding City Engagement in Community-Focused Sustainability Initiatives, *Cityscape: A Journal of Policy Development and Research*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 143-162.
- De Rooij, R. (2002) The Impact of the European Union on local government in the Netherlands, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 447-467.
- Denters, S.A.H. Tonkens, E.H. Verhoeven, I. Bakker, J.H.M. (2012) *Burgers maken hun buurt*, Den Haag: Platform31.
- Denters, S.A.H. (2016) Chapter 11: Community Self-organization: potentials and pitfalls, in: Edelenbos, J. Van Meerkerk, I. (eds.) *Critical Reflections of Interactive Governance*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 230-253.
- Edelenbos, J. & Van Meerkerk, I. (2016) Introduction: three reflecting perspectives on interactive governance, in: Edelenbos, J. & Van Meerkerk, I. (eds.) *Critical Reflections on Interactive Governance*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 1-28.
- Emerson & Nabatchi (2015) Evaluating the Productivity of Collaborative Governance Regimes: A Performance Matrix, *Public Performance & Management Review*, vol. 38, no. 4, pp. 717-747
- Eshuis, J. & Klijn, E.H. (2012) *Branding in Governance and Public Management*, London: Routledge.

- European Commission (2011) *Cities of Tomorrow – Challenges, visions, ways forward*, European Commission Directorate General for Regional Policy, October 2011.
- Goldsmith, M. (2003) Variable Geometry, Multilevel Governance: European Integration and Subnational Government in the New Millennium, in: Featherstone, K. & Radaelli, C.M. (eds.) *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 112-133.
- Guderjan, M. (2015) Theorising European Integration of Local Government – Insights from the Fusion Approach, *Local Government Studies*, vol. 41, no. 6, pp. 937-955.
- Guderjan, M. & Miles, L. (2016) The fusion approach – applications for understanding local government and European integration, *Journal of European Integration*, vol. 38, no; 6, pp. 637-652.
- Hooghe, L. & Marks, G. (2003) Unraveling the Central State, but how? Types of Multi-level governance, *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 97, no. 2, pp. 233-243.
- Hordijk, M. Sara, L.M. Sutherland, C. Scott, D. (2016) Participatory Instruments and Practices in Urban Governance, in: Gupta, J. Pfeffer, K. Verrest, H. Ros-Tonen, M. (eds.) *Geographies of Urban Governance*, Springer International Publishing, pp. 127-146.
- John, P. (2000) The Europeanisation of Sub-national Governance, *Urban Studies*, vol. 37, no. 5-6, pp. 877- 894.
- John, P. (2001) *Local Governance in Western Europe*, London: SAGE.
- Keast, R. (2014) Network Theory Tracks and Trajectories: Where from, Where to? In: Keast, R. Mandell, M. & Agranoff, R. (eds.) *Network Theory in the Public Sector – Building New Theoretical Frameworks*, New York: Routledge.
- Klausen, M.J.F. & Goldsmith, K.K. (1997) *European Integration and Local Government*, London: Edward Elgar.
- Klijn, E.H. & Koppenjan, J. (2016) *Governance Networks in the Public Sector*, London: Routledge.
- Kübler, D. & Piliuyte, J. (2007) Intergovernmental relations and international urban strategies: constraints and opportunities in multilevel polities, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, vol. 25, pp. 357-373.
- Levi-Faur, D. (2012) From “Big Government” to “Big Governance”?, in: Levi-Faur, D. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press , pp. 3-18.
- Lowndes, V. Pratchett, L. & Stoker, L. (2006) Diagnosing and Remediating the Failings of Official Participation Schemes: The CLEAR framework, *Social Policy & Society*, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 281-291.
- Marshall, A. (2005) Europeanization at the urban level: Local actors, institutions and the dynamics of mutli-level interaction, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 668-686.
- Matthew, B. & Ross, L. (2010) *Research Methods – A practical guide for the social sciences*, Harlow: Pearson.
- Molin, M.D. & Masella, C. (2016) From Fragmentation to Comprehensiveness in Network Governance, *Public Organization Review*, vol. 16, pp. 493-508.

- O+S Amsterdam (2014) *Amsterdam in cijfers*, Jaarboek 2014 is een productie van O+S in opdracht van de Gemeente Amsterdam.
- O+S Amsterdam (2017) *Amsterdam in cijfers*, Jaarboek 2017 is een productie van O+S in opdracht van de Gemeente Amsterdam.
- Olsen, J.P. (2002) The Many Faces of Europeanization, *JCMS*, vol. 40, no. 5, pp. 921-52.
- Peters, B.G. & Pierre, J. (1998) Governance without Government? Rethinking Public Administration, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 223-243.
- Potjer, S. & Hajer, M. (2017) *Learning with cities, learning for cities – The Golden Opportunity of the Urban Agenda for the EU*, Utrecht: Urban Futures Studio.
- Raad voor het Openbare Bestuur (ROB) (2013) *Met Europa Verbonden – Een Verkenning van de betekenis van Europa voor gemeenten en provincies*, november 2013.
- Røiseland, A. & Vabo, S.I. (2016) Interactive – or counteractive – governance? Lessons learned about citizen participation and political leadership, in: Edelenbos, J. & Van Meerkerk, I. (eds.) *Critical Reflections on Interactive Governance*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 120-144.
- Schalk, J. (2017) Linking Stakeholder Involvement to Policy Performance: Nonlinear Effects in Dutch Local Government Policy Making, *American Review of Public Administration*, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 479-495.
- Schultze, C.J. (2003) Cities and EU governance: Policy-takers or policy-makers, *Regional & Federal Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 121-147.
- Scott, T.A. & Thomas, C.W. (2017) Unpacking the Collaborative Toolbox: Why and When Do Public Managers Choose Collaborative Governance Strategies? *The Policy Studies Journal*, vol. 45, no. 1, pp. 191-214.
- Torfig, J. (2012) Network Governance, in: Levi-Faur, D. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Torfig, J. Peters, B.G. Pierre, J. & Sørensen, E. (2012) *Interactive Governance – Advancing the Paradigm*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Torfig, J. & Sørensen, E. (2014) The European Debate on governance networks: Towards a new and viable paradigm? *Policy and Society*, vol. 33, no. 4, pp. 329-344.
- Urban Agenda for the EU (2016) Pact of Amsterdam.
- Van Buren, M.W. (2017) *Vormgeven aan uitnodigend bestuur – Pleidooi voor ontwerpgerichte bestuurskunde*, Rotterdam: Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam.
- Verba, S. Lehman, K. Schlozman, H. Brady, E. (1995) *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*, Harvard University Press.
- Verhelst, T. (2017) Processes and patterns of urban Europeanisation: Evidence from the EUROCITIES network, *International Journal of Urban Planning*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 75-96.
- Vereniging van Nederlandse Gemeenten (VNG) (2016) *Visiedocument Europa 2017-2020 De inhoudelijke inzet van de VNG op Europese zaken*.

Wolffhardt, A. (2005) Introduction: The European Engagement of Cities, in: Antalovsky, E. Dangschat, J.S. & Parkinson, M. (eds.) *Cities in Europe, Europe in Cities*, European Metropolitan Governance, pp. 391-436.

Wolffhardt, A. Bartik, H. Meegan, R. Dangschat, J.S. & Hamedinger, A. (2005) Chapter 2.5: Explaining the European engagement of cities – factors, motivations and effects on local governance, in: Antalovsky, E. Dangschat, J.S. & Parkinson, M. (eds.) *Cities in Europe, Europe in Cities*, European Metropolitan Governance, pp. 391-436.

Yin, R.K. (2014) *Case Study Research – Design and methods*, 5th edition, London: SAGE.

7 Appendix

The questions used during the interviews:

1. In what European activities is the municipality participating?
2. What is according to you the primary motivation(s) for your city to be involved with European activities? (Solves problems? Image? Threat? Alternative? Duty?).
3. Are there ambitions, in the form of actual plans to become active on European matters?
4. Do you feel the municipality has enough contacts outside the organization related to the European affairs?
5. Is there someone in the organization who is taking or who took a leadership role to become involved in European activities?
6. Do you feel the municipality has qualified personnel to be involved in European activities?
7. Are there enough FTEs available for European activities?
8. Is the municipality big enough to be involved in European affairs, according to you?
9. Are the rules and procedures open and understandable for those involved with them?
10. When did European activities come about in the municipal organization?
11. Do you feel European activities are useful for the city? (ability to change/make a difference)
12. Is there an intra-organizational, shared belief that European activities are useful?
13. Is there improvement needed to help cities Europeanize? If so, how?