

Being strategic or tactical? The adoption of development strategies by local government units in Poland



POZNAŃ UNIVERSITY
OF ECONOMICS
AND BUSINESS

Monika Banaszewska*

Tomasz Skica**

* Poznań University of Economics and Business, Poland

** University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszow, Poland

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND RESEARCH GAP

Local development policies are the subject of numerous studies (e.g., Glaeser et al., 2004; Rodriguez-Pose & Wilkie, 2019). Development strategies, as **tools for strategic management of local development**, occupy a special place in them (Guzal-Dec, 2015). However, while the issue of creating development strategies (especially at the local level of local government units), is widespread and thus often described in the literature (Pina et al., 2011), the **motives for their creation** by Polish municipalities are much less recognized (Sztando, 2017). The question arises whether the reason is an **awareness of the role they play in local development management** (Rodriguez-Pose & Tijmstra, 2009), or whether **other considerations** determine this.

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

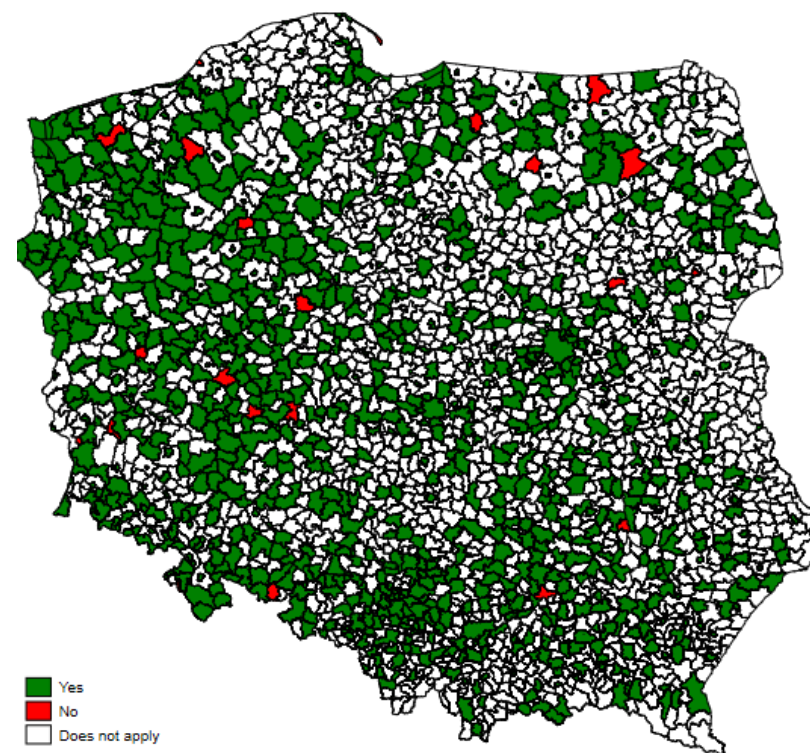
The paper aims to verify whether the enactment of development strategies by municipalities in Poland is motivated by obtaining EU funding.

SAMPLE AND METHODS

302 urban and 677 urban-rural municipalities in Poland (100% coverage)
Years: 1991-2023 (since the restoration of local government in Poland)
CAWI method supplemented with CATI

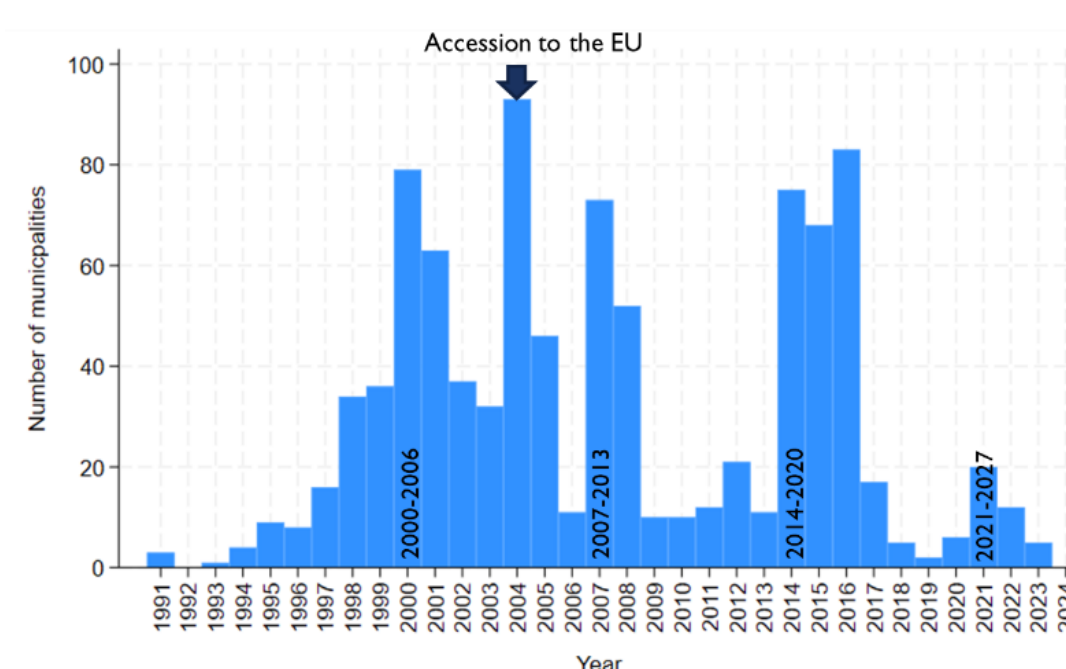
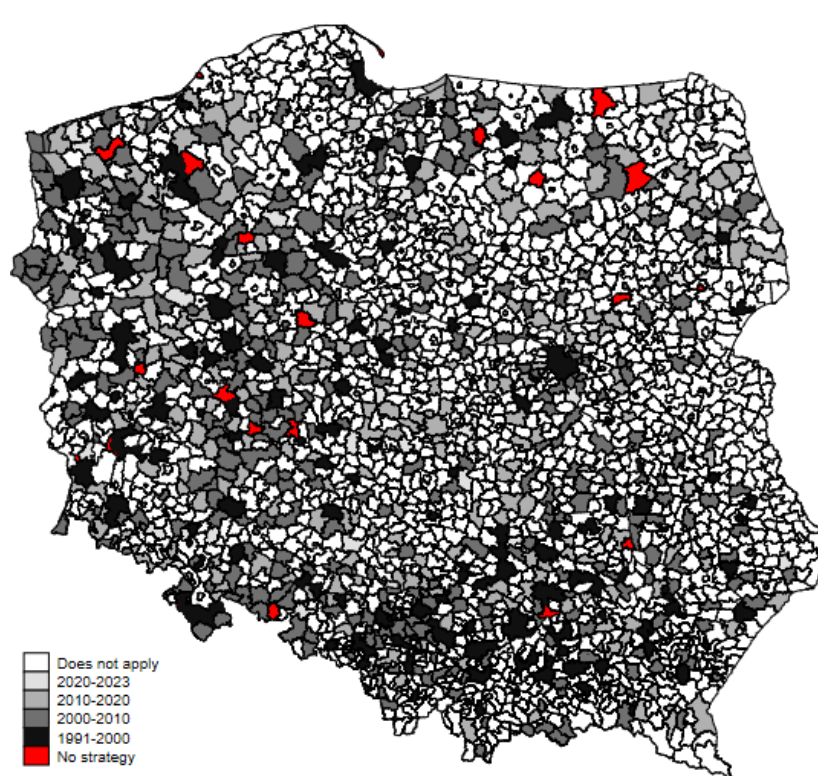
RESULTS

Has a municipality ever had a development strategy?



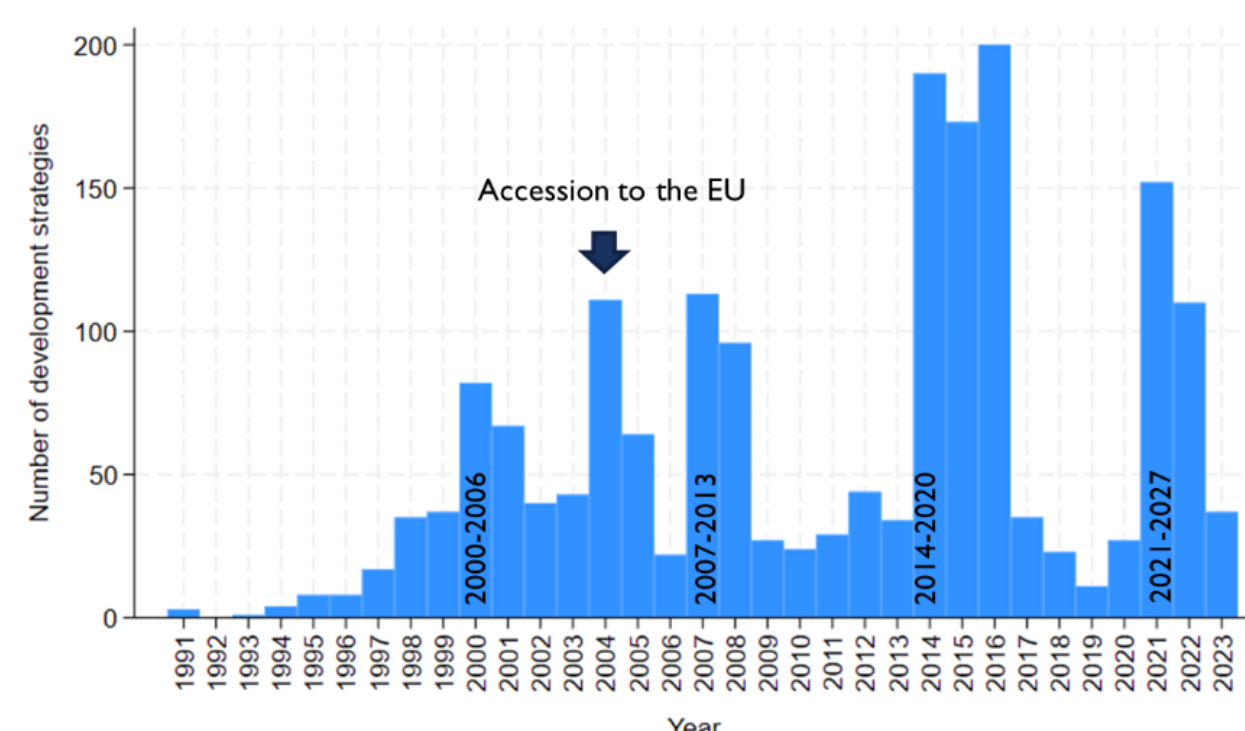
When was the first ever development strategy adopted?

N = 957



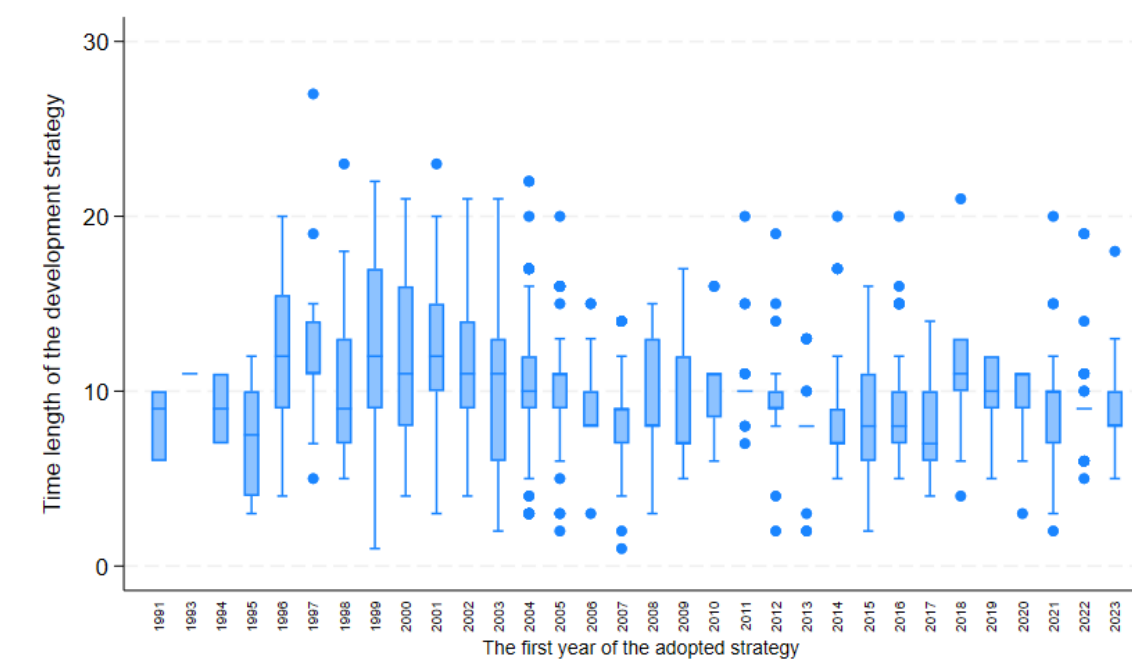
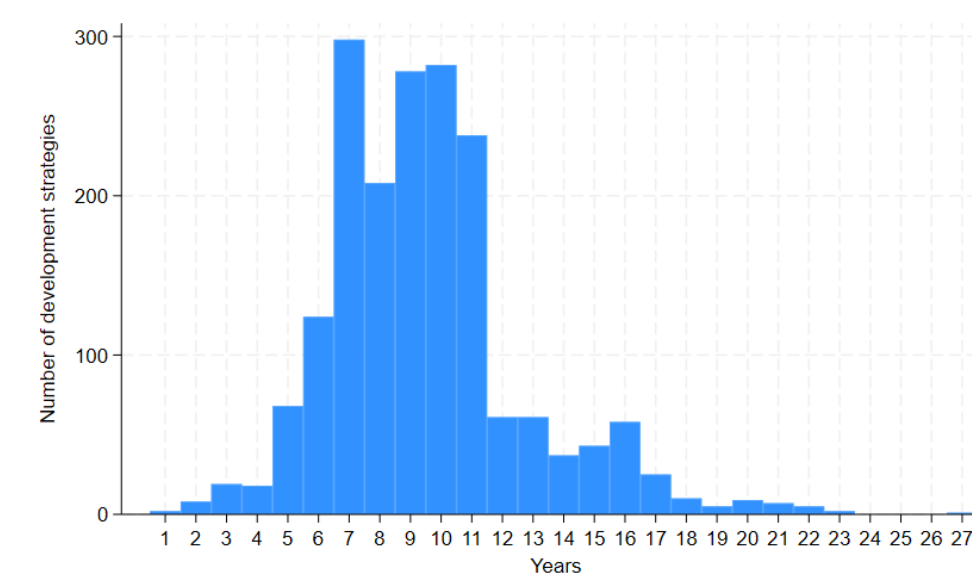
In which years did the municipal development strategies begin?

N = 1867



For what period were municipal development strategies adopted?

N = 1867



CONCLUSIONS

- The enactment of development strategies by Polish urban and urban-rural municipalities is vastly widespread.
- The timing of the first ever development strategies vary significantly across analyzed units. For the early adopters it dates back to the beginning of 1990s, whereas the latest followers decided to enact a development strategy only over 30 years after the restoration of local government in Poland
- The first adoption of development strategy and the enactment of next strategies correlates strongly with the timing of EU multiannual budgetary frameworks.
- The hypothesis that the preparation of municipal development strategies is driven by EU policies receives further support when the duration of respective documents is considered. The vast majority of them encompass between 7 and 10 years. The EU financial perspective covers 7 years. Until 2020, the n+3 rule was applicable, and in the 2021-2027 perspective, the n+2 rule has been included.
- Over time, municipalities have learned to prepare strategies mimicking the duration of the EU financial perspectives.

NEXT RESEARCH STEPS

In the next step we will investigate the content of municipal development strategies. Of interest it will be to also address the question whether the EU funding serves as a significant mediator between the strategy adoption and its successful implementation.

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CONTACT

Email:

monika.banaszewska@ue.poznan.pl

tskica@wsiz.edu.pl



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