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# **Political and Structural Reforms in the Metropolitan Areas of Germany**

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## **Introduction**

Discussing problems caused by urban sprawl has a relatively long tradition in Germany. Like in many other countries the main question concerns the most suitable organisational form of political management in urban agglomeration areas (Kübler 2003). Different models were discussed in the 1960s, in consequence of the urban incorporation processes, and at the beginning of the 1980s within the European integration context. In Germany, urban regions are usually organised as associations of local authorities with planning and development control functions. Scholars have recently been demanding that simple association models should be replaced by "regional governance" (Benz 2001). This concept describes control structures based on the cooperation between public- and private-sector actors, but also allowing for hierarchical regulation and policy competition (Brenner 2003). In the 1990s, the world-wide globalization process was a main reason for a new stage of regional cooperation. In the Western as well as in the Eastern part of Germany an increase in building metropolitan areas to keep up with the international competition was observable.

Today there is an ongoing dispute about the structural intensity in regional cooperation forms. Wagner (1982) differentiated between weak and strong association forms on the basis of the institutional sovereignty regarding their competences, resources and legitimation. Regional associations with weak structures have very few competences, tasks and resources and are legitimated by the members of cooperating cities or counties. Regional associations with strong structures have large competences, tasks and resources and are legitimated directly by the citizenry. In an updated article Kübler (2003) gave an overview of metropolitan research and cited three different approaches of metropolitan governance: metropolitan reform with the intention of strong associations, public choice with the intention of weak associations and new regionalism as a new cooperation form. The first question in this article concerns the usefulness of these approaches for Germany. To that end we characterize the nine biggest metropolitan areas in West and East Germany to answer the questions about the government strategy and the institutional design of the new bodies. One assumption is that various political-administrative conditions, industrial landscapes and regional traditions require different solutions (Fürst 1997; Salet et al. 2003).

The second part of this paper will give a detailed examination of the reform development and implementation process in the metropolitan area of Stuttgart, the capital of Baden-Wuerttemberg. The experiences of the last decade can answer questions about implementation speed, reform acceptance and the political, organizational results. Finally, we try to present an agenda for future stages in the research on metropolitan governance in Germany.

## 1. Metropolitan areas in West and Eastern Germany

In Germany questions about regional cooperation and adequate forms were discussed mainly by researchers of public administration, less by political scientists. It is also necessary, however, to consider the political-administrative contexts of metropolitan cooperation. On the one hand because they determine the models of solution and on the other because different administrative and cultural traditions require different forms of regional cooperation. So in countries like the US or Switzerland weak forms of cooperation are more supposable because these countries emphasize the individual autonomy and modes of self-administration. In countries like France, Great Britain or Sweden strong forms of metropolitan associations are more likely because the influence of the federal state on the local level is relatively high (Fürst 1997).

For the selection of the biggest metropolitan areas we have considered the current migration changes in Germany. Figure 1 indicates that the agglomeration process in Germany is not at its end. We see a demographic change of high importance: the difference between citizens coming into and leaving certain geographical areas in the year of 2000.<sup>1</sup> High positive influx changes are marked blue, negative migration red, moderate gains up to 1000 persons are green, moderate losses yellow. The map shows very impressively the pull of seven metropolitan areas in West Germany: The cities of Hamburg, Berlin, Hanover, Dortmund/Essen, Frankfurt (Main), Stuttgart and Munich are deep blue; the areas surrounding them light blue. There seems to be a correlation between the size of the core city and the sprawl power into the region. So Hamburg and Berlin have wider rings of influx than for example Hanover.

In East Germany only Dresden and Leipzig have the tendency to develop into metropolitan areas. The situation in Eastern Germany is strongly distinct from the western part of the country. After the German unification, a process of urban regeneration and modernization has been initiated but not finished yet. Functioning settlement structures and infrastructures are important prerequisites for national and international competition. The two mentioned regions initiated several cooperation forms to achieve an internationally comparable standard. That is the reason why they are included in this analysis.

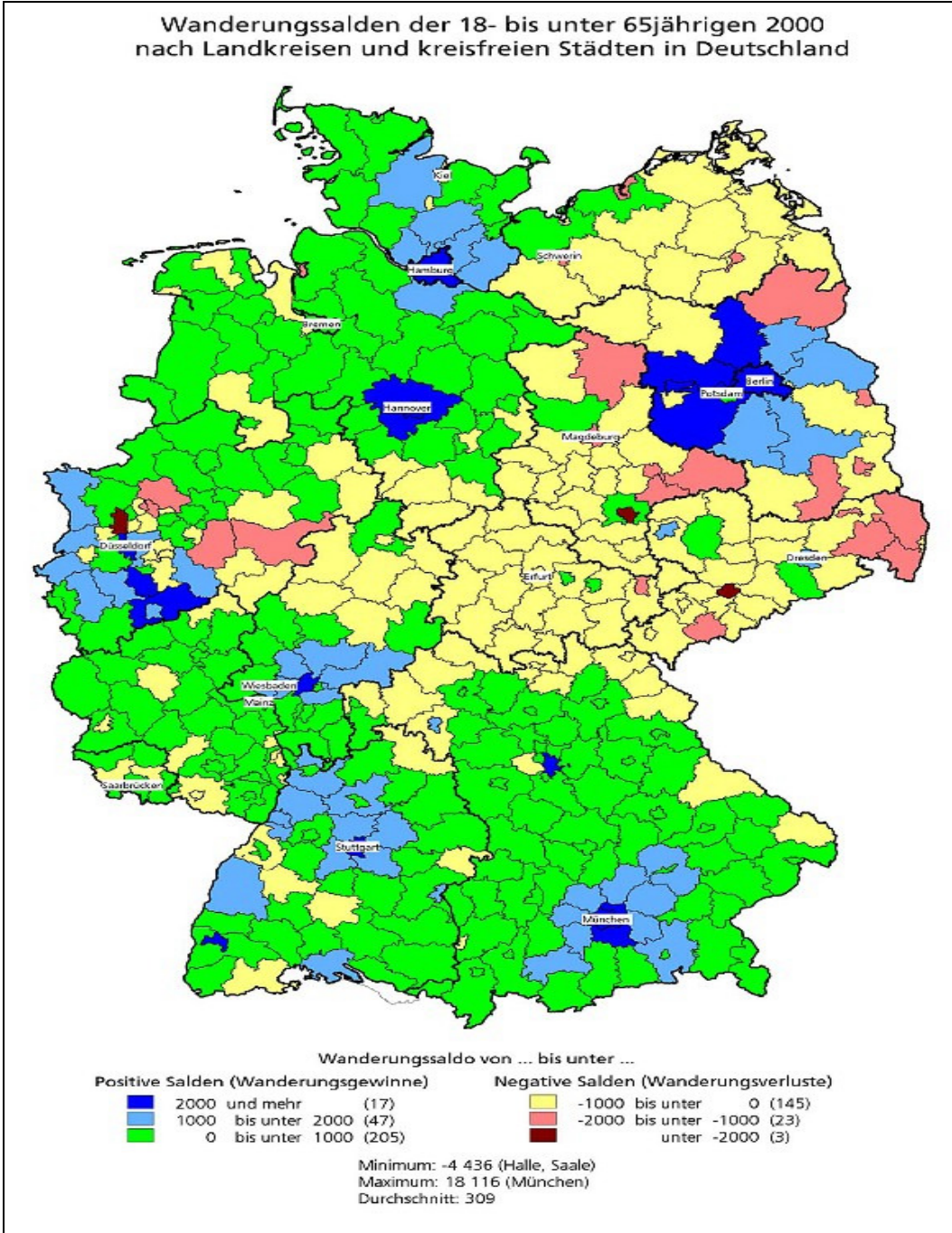
The expansion of the agglomeration areas into their surrounding areas in the last decades causes serious problems in Germany. The growth in settlement area and traffic leads to congestion in urban agglomerations and threatens their viability and attractiveness. These spatial development trends have negative effects on

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<sup>1</sup> Information about migration balance is related to persons between the age of 18 and 65 because they constitute the working strata of society

the environment and hence on the quality of life. Increasing land claims and impairments through housing, industry, commerce and traffic endanger the quality of natural resources. As a result of the decline in employment in old industries, some agglomeration areas are in danger of falling behind in their economic development; some rural areas are disadvantaged in several ways by an unfavourable economic structure and poor accessibility. These areas are seriously restricted in their development. All these problems present important challenges for spatial planning and economic development in German metropolitan areas.

Figure 1: Migration balance in Germany 2000 (citizen between 18 and 65 years)

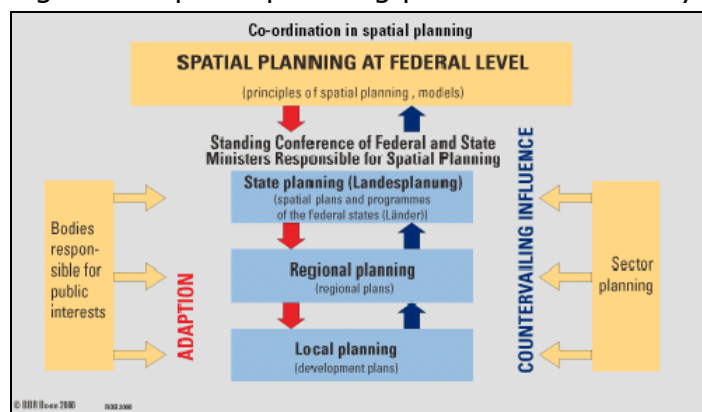


Source: www.statistik-bw.de, based on county-free cities and counties.

## 1.1. Spatial and regional planning in Germany

Spatial planning in Germany relies on federalist and specialist cooperation instead of hierarchical and centralised decision-making. This is the reason why a comprehensive spatial planning program does not exist for the whole federal territory. Central emphasis is put on strengthening the regions and their specific potentials as well as on encouraging intra-regional cooperation. The Federal Regional Planning Act formulates the principles and goals of spatial planning as well as guidelines such as sustainable spatial development. It obliges the federal Laender to establish comprehensive planning programs for their territory but mainly leaves the concrete design in terms of content up to them and to the regional planning authorities (see figure 2).

Figure 2: Spatial planning process in Germany



Source: Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning 2001

Spatial planning is therefore shaped by diverse integration and coordination processes between the spatial planning levels of the federal government, the Laender, the regions and the municipalities, but also between spatially effective sector planning of the departments for social welfare, the economy, the environment and transportation. In the context of the amended 1998 Federal Regional Planning Act, numerous new focuses of activities and instruments which strengthen regional competitiveness and sustainable regional development have been introduced recently. These range from innovative approaches to intra-regional cooperation, regional land management, integrated transportation and trade conceptions, the application of new information technologies and the regional protection of open spaces to new forms of cultural activities in the regions. During the 1990s, the majority of the federal Laender agreed on new spatial planning programs for their respective territories. This was done for the first time in the new federal Laender. Their statements are supplemented and put into concrete terms by regional plans which usually cover the territories of several counties. In the old federal Länder, there are legally binding plans for almost all re-

gions. In contrast, regional plans are not yet available for the entire area of the new Laender. Since the region is becoming increasingly important for the realisation of spatial planning goals, **new informal and voluntary instruments** complement the often rigid regional plans, which in many cases hinder a fast and flexible reaction to changing conditions. Examples of these instruments are regional development concepts, in which special interest groups and public authorities agree on goals and concrete actions, or contractual agreements between municipalities and private companies, which determine the contents and measures of spatial plans, or urban networks, in which cities cooperate in certain sectors (Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning 2001).

## **1.2. Main characteristics of the German metropolitan areas**

The German metropolitan areas have indicated structural transformation processes for approximately three decades. The growth rates are not high enough to compensate the effects of economic rationalization and to stabilize the employment level. The appearance of attractive settlements outside the core city threatens the traditional city structure. As a result of the movement of labour and business firms – especially new, attractive companies and shopping malls – to the suburbs and the region, the function of the core city and the whole region has become vulnerable (Benz et al. 1998; REK 2000). The consequences of structural changes in metropolitan areas are mirrored by many social and economic problems. Unemployment rates in metropolitan areas are above-average compared to the federal or the federal-state level. Because of the excess of age – reinforced by suburb migration – the core city has a relatively low activity rate. Instead, the cities need more social aid and care for the elderly. The above-average settlement of socially poor people weighs heavily in the budget of the core cities. These focal points of unemployment, poverty and segregation show clear tendencies of a degeneration of some residential areas in German core cities into slums. A so called “basic unemployment” emerged, which will not decrease in the long run. As a consequence, the population is divided into people with and without jobs. The latter group lives in districts with bad but cheap residences, also implying less social and public safety. “The spiral of decline and crime speeds up” (Benz et al. 1998: 6, translation MWR). So the patterns of metropolitan change correspond tendentially to the archetypical pattern of “suburbanization” in North American urban regions.

In this chapter the main characteristics of the above identified nine metropolitan areas in Germany will be analysed in relation to the question mentioned in the introduction. Which form of regional cooperation was chosen, what are the main

tasks and what kind of legitimation is given? Are there similar or different patterns observable and is it possible to identify a special trend of cooperation in these metropolitan areas? And, furthermore, are there signs for the confirmation of the assumption that every single region needs a special cooperation solution (Wahl 1998)?

**Hamburg** and **Hanover** as regions from North Germany are located in areas facing considerable economic hardship. Hanover more than Hamburg because of Hamburg's advantage of having a big international seaport. **Berlin**, as the new capital of Germany since the unification, has the highest financial debts of all German cities (54 billion €). Being the seat of the national government and international business firms, however, the potential for successful development is very high. The metropolitan area of **Dortmund/Essex** is located in the Ruhr district, the old industrial centre of Germany, which has experienced a severe economic decline during the last few decades. The three southern regions of **Frankfurt**, **Stuttgart** and **Munich** used to be prospering economic centres, but have also run into economic troubles recently. The two East German regions, **Halle/Leipzig** and **Dresden**, have undergone a profound social and economic transformation after the breakdown of the former GDR and are still changing.

Two German regions show a relatively long tradition in associations organizing the relationship between core cities and the areas around: The Ruhr district and the maritime city of Hamburg. The "Kommunalverband Ruhrgebiet" was established as a settlement association in 1920. It was the reaction to strong deficits in federal-state and local-regional planning in a region which had developed from a small village structure into the biggest economic centre in Europe after the First World War. The tasks had been developing building plans as well as dealing with infrastructure, environment and housing development. This association was a national and international landmark for an integrated regional spatial planning. The federal state of Hamburg started very early common regional planning with Schleswig-Holstein (1955) and Lower Saxony (1957).

During the 1960s and the early 1970s, large-scale urban agglomerations such as Hanover (Urban Association Greater Hanover, 1962), Stuttgart (Association Region middle Neckar, 1973) or Munich (Association of regional planning Munich, 1973) consolidated metropolitan institutions which focussed on the issues of administrative efficiency, local service provision, regional planning and spatial redistribution. By the early 1980s, however, these technocratic projects of metropolitan governance had been widely discredited and were increasingly under attack. Local governments subsequently began to mobilize new strategies of endogenous economic development in order to cope with place-specific socio-

economic problems, to adjust to newly imposed fiscal constraints and to attract new sources of external capital investment (Eisenschitz/Gough 1993).

So in the 1990s the resurgence of metropolitan governance in Germany had the same causes as in other areas of Western Europe: The necessity of success in a new quality of competitive regionalism. In two German cities – Stuttgart and Hanover – entirely new metropolitan institutions had been constructed in which a broad range of regional planning competencies and administrative powers were concentrated. These new institutional frameworks for political negotiations concerned various major regional issues like economic development, place marketing and infrastructural planning, suburban sprawl or environmental sustainability. The important implication for this kind of strong associational structures is the direct legitimation by the citizenry and thus a democratic accountability.

The three areas of Berlin/Brandenburg, Halle/Leipzig and Dresden appeared in the last decade of the 1990s. The regions of Berlin, Brandenburg and Dresden are participating in the EU-RITTS program of the European Commission for structural development and effectiveness of the innovation and technology transfer in the regions of Europe. The secular objective will be the optimization of the regional technology transfer including support measures according to demand. Until now, RITTS projects have been worked on in 70 regions of Europe.

Due to its historical tradition, Berlin has been a special area with manifold problems since the Second World War. In contrast to other big cities, Berlin was not able to cooperate with the areas surrounding the city for many decades. Only through the German unification cooperation with Brandenburg became possible. Since the unification Berlin has faced considerable economic difficulties, including a continuous decline in the number of companies and the number of jobs available. The eastern part of Berlin suffers from an outdated infrastructure and has lost a significant number of jobs and enterprises in the restructuring process during the 1990s. The western part still suffers from its isolated position, having been surrounded by the provinces of the former GDR. Special Berlin subsidies for investors from West Germany, which were awarded before the reunification, no longer exist which resulted in a large number of companies leaving the city in the 1990s. The economic integration of Berlin and the surrounding region of Brandenburg has not yet proven satisfactory (Benz/König 1995).

For an integration in regional politics, Berlin and Brandenburg constituted a provisional board of regions (1990), in 1995 they decided to cooperate in planning and space structure politics. The infrastructure has a strong potential, but the different elements do not work together as a system. Moreover, Berlin has not got a single innovation strategy. Within this framework, the regional actors realised the importance of developing a coherent innovation strategy for Berlin. The

number of companies located in Berlin, the number of jobs available and the trend of the regional economy show that the economy of Berlin is in decline – a decline which is not necessarily reversed by relocation of the federal German capital from Bonn to Berlin. In launching a RITTS project, the “Technologie-stiftung Innovationszentrum Berlin” (TSB) intended to mitigate this decline by developing an innovation strategy for Berlin. A key principle in the project was to work in tight cooperation with all actors in the city involved in innovation and technology policy as well as with representatives of the region’s scientific and industrial world. A main focus was therefore communication and negotiation with industrial and scientific actors in the core city and the counties around.

In Eastern Germany around the county-free cities Halle, Leipzig, Dessau and Dresden initiatives from the national state, federal state and business firms were started in order to transform these areas into regions with high infrastructural and economic standards. At the same time the officials and citizens of these regions recognize that they need more regional cooperation for solving common problems. In 1992 the metropolitan area Halle/Leipzig/Dessau was created, in 1999 Dresden participated in the RITTS project.

### **1.3. Conditions and formal structure of metropolitan cooperation**

Table 1 gives some comparative information regarding the metropolitan areas. The structural data indicate that the regions have very different conditions to solve very similar tasks. The density per square kilometre is highest in the Ruhr district where 5.5 million inhabitants live in 53 municipalities within an area of 4.434 square kilometres. In the “Metropolregion Hamburg” 4 million people live in 500 municipalities within an area of 19.000 square kilometres, so the density of 210 square kilometres is very low. The very densely populated areas of the Ruhr District, Berlin/Brandenburg and Stuttgart are confronted with other problems than the less densely populated areas of Frankfurt, Hanover or Munich or the hardly densely populated areas of Dresden, Hamburg or Halle/Leipzig.

Three of the nine metropolitan areas have cooperation structures crossing the borderline of one federal state. The “Metropolregion Hamburg” includes the federal states of Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony, in the region of Halle/Leipzig the two federal states Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt work together like the federal state of Berlin does with Brandenburg (Breuste/Kabisch 1996; Benz/König 1995). Because of these state boundaries, cooperation at an autonomous regional level and the incorporation of an institutionalized association is hardly possible.

Table 1: Characteristics of nine metropolitan areas in Germany (ranking by cooperation tradition)

metro-politan area	name of cooperation structure		coop-eration tradi-tion	struc-ture	federal states	form of cooperation	legitimation	administrative units	budget funds in million € per year <sup>2</sup>	mu-nici-palities	size in km <sup>2</sup>	inhabi-tants	core city	den-sity per km <sup>2</sup>
1. Dortmund/ Essen	Kommunalverband Ruhrgebiet (1979)	Ruhr district	1920	poly-centric	1	assembly of members, board of association	local councils	11 countyfree cities, 4 counties	75.6	53	4.434	5.447.000	590.831	1222
2. Hamburg	Metropolregion Hamburg (1991)	Metropolitan Region Hamburg	1955 1957	mono-centric	3	different forms of cooperation	different forms of legitimation	1 city state, 13 counties	2.9	500	19.000	3.997.000	1.704.700	210
3. Hanover	Kommunalverband Grossraum Hannover (1962)	Urban Association Greater Hanover	1962	mono-centric	1	assembly of members, board of association since 2001 regional parliament	1962-2000 local & district council, since 2001 <b>citizenry</b>	1 countyfree city, 1 county	42.0	21	2.287	1.200.000	516.000	525
4. Stuttgart	Verband Region Stuttgart (1994)	Association Region Stuttgart	1973	poly-centric	1	since 1994 regional parliament	<b>citizenry</b>	1 countyfree city, 5 counties	130.0	179	3.654	2.649.604	590.112	725
5. Munich	Regionaler Planungsverband München (1973)	Association of regional planning Munich	1973	mono-centric	1	assembly of members	federal state law	1 countyfree city, 8 counties	0.3	186	5.504	2.400.000	1.200.000	455
6. Frankfurt	Ballungsraum Frankfurt/Rhein-Main (2001)	Frankfurt/Rhine-Main	1974	poly-centric	1	regional council	day of association (105 directly elected members)	2 countyfree cities, 6 counties	10.6	75	1.427	1.600.000	642.279	556
7. Berlin/ Brandenburg	RITTS-Region Berlin RITTS-Region Brandenburg; Provisorischer Regionalausschuss (1990)	Provisional Board of Region	1990	mono-centric	2	different forms of cooperation	voluntary cooperation (treaty)	1 city state, 8 counties	No detailed information	275	5.360	4.300.000	3.450.000	802
8. Halle/Leipzig	Region Halle/Leipzig/ Dessau (1993)	Region Halle- Leipzig	1992	mono-centric	2	different forms of cooperation	different forms of legitimation	3 countyfree cities, 17 counties	0.4	?	13.100	2.580.000	494.795	197
9. Dresden	RITTS-Region Dresden (1999) <sup>1</sup>	RITTS-Region Dresden	1999	mono-centric	1	Innovation and Labor Foundation of Saxony	foundation	1 countyfree city, 4 counties	No detailed information	87	3.406	1.035.000	511.759	304
9 areas Germany											58.172 357.021	25.208.604 82.398.326	(31 %)	555 291

<sup>1</sup>RITTS is a program of the European Union to support "Regional Innovation and Technology Transfer Strategies". <sup>2</sup> All budget numbers see Benz et al. 1998.

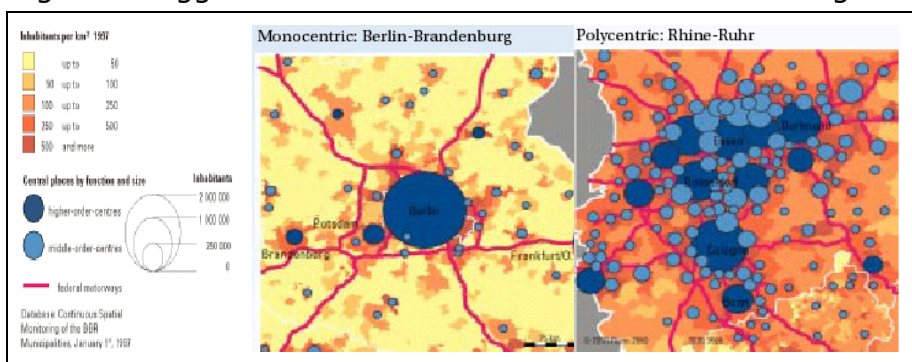
Table 1a: Share of foreigners in metropolitan areas

Metropolitan Area	foreigners regional area	foreigners core city
1. Dortmund/Essen	11.8	-
2. Hamburg	10.5	15.2
3. Hanover	-	-
4. Stuttgart	17.4	24.5
5. Munich	16.3	22.6
6. Frankfurt	15.9	24.6
7. Berlin/Brandenburg	9.3	12.7
8. Halle/Leipzig	3.0	5.0
9. Dresden	-	-

Data see Münz/Ulrich (1998)

Multiple tasks and problems were also caused by the polycentric structure of some metropolitan areas like Dortmund/Essen (Rhine-Ruhr), Stuttgart and Frankfurt (Benz et al. 1998; Faust 1998; Frohner 1998; Hötcker 1998). If the counties around a core city offer similar or better living and working conditions, then a suburbanization process is more likely to occur than in a monocentric area. On the other hand, the growing middle-sized municipalities around a core city will in the long run face the same problems as the centre (figure 3).

Figure 3: Agglomeration structure in Berlin-Brandenburg and Rhine-Ruhr



Source: Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning 2001

Finally, the number of foreign people in the core cities and the suburbs confirm the assumption that the urban centres show a high influx of foreign people and their families (Table 1a). This process is outstanding in the cities of Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Munich and less strong in Hamburg, Berlin/Brandenburg, Halle/Leipzig and Dresden.

These different structural pre-conditions lead to the conclusion that the nine metropolitan areas need diverse solutions for regional cooperation. Referring to existing theoretical models there are three models supposable. Researchers in the "metropolitan-reform tradition" promote strong institutionalization to avoid the political and economic disadvantages of fragmented areas. Empirical examples of these consolidations are incorporations of municipalities which occurred at the beginning and in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Otherwise the problems can be solved by the creation of a new political organisation at the regional level which features extensive competences and a strong legitimation for example by the citizenry (Kübler 2003: 536). In contrast to this, researchers in the "public choice tradition" support the advantages of fragmentation in metropolitan areas and defeat the consolidation of metropolitan areas. They favour a cooperation model of "Functional Overlapping Competing Jurisdictions (FOCJ)" (Frey/Eichenberger 2001). That means purpose-oriented networks of voluntary inter-regional cooperation showing extensive democratic rights of participation, their own legitimation and taxes, and are not separated territorially.

At the beginning of the 1990s a third theoretical model, “new regionalism”, appeared (Norris 2001). Contrary to the other two models, the new regionalists do not support the argument that political regulation must be organised by public bodies (metropolitan or local governments). In their experience most models in practice show structures of network cooperation between public and private actors and therewith a relatively weak institutionalization (Fürst 1997). Metropolitan governance is seen as organized by more or less formal and stable systems of different actors whose composition and cooperation is adopted to the specific institutional frameworks and interests in a region.

Following these three models and the **main** cooperation structure in each metropolitan area, we can observe several models. Table 2 displays that the range goes from loose purpose-oriented networks (Dresden) and state-run regional planning (Berlin/Brandenburg, Munich) over state-run local mixtures (Hamburg, Halle/Leipzig) to relatively strong institutionalized associations at the regional level (Frankfurt, Dortmund/Essen, Stuttgart, Hanover). The creation of a single regional municipality (Regionalstadt) which is the strongest institutional reform along with the formation of regional districts or of “Communautés Urbaines” are not in practice. Therefore, we have to keep in mind, that stronger forms exist and are often discussed but aren’t yet supported in Germany.

Table 2: Models of metropolitan governance in Germany

metropolitan area	governance form	reform model	competences	tasks	re-sources	legitimation
1. Dresden	purpose-oriented loose networks	new regionalism	weak	some	No detailed information	low (voluntary cooperation)
2. Berlin/Brandenburg	state-run regional planning & loose purpose-oriented networks	new regionalism	weak	some	No detailed information	middle (state federal law)
3. Munich	state-run regional planning	public choice	middle	some	low	middle (state federal law)
4. Hamburg	state-run-local mixtures	public choice	weak	some	low	low (voluntary cooperation)
5. Halle/Leipzig	state-run-local mixtures	public choice	middle	some	low	middle (state federal law)
6. Frankfurt	relatively strong institutionalized association	metropolitan reform	strong	relatively wide	middle	low (voluntary cooperation)
7. Dortmund/Essen	relatively strong institutionalized association	metropolitan reform	strong	relatively wide	high	middle (local councils)
8. Stuttgart	relatively strong institutionalized association	metropolitan reform	strong	relatively wide	high	high (citizenry)
9. Hanover	relatively strong institutionalized association	metropolitan reform	strong	relatively wide	middle	high (citizenry)

Information about the metropolitan areas see Benz et al. (1998).

The advantage of a strongly institutionalized association is the accountability of one regional level. Thus, conflicts between different administrative levels and associations can be minimized. Furthermore, there is a simplification of administrative processes and the possibility of lean management, all in all implying more efficiency. Studies in the United States indicated that agglomerations with strong institutionalization have had the greatest economic efficiency because “the sum of efforts within a metropolitan region yields a unique synergy, which its local

parts cannot achieve separately” (Savitch et al. 1993: 342). But the incorporation of that reform model is only possible under special conditions. In Hanover it was much easier than in Stuttgart, because only one core city and one county were involved (Heinz et al. 2004). Another prerequisite are clear and consistent reform politics of the federal state government. In most cases the federal politicians fear the competition of a new level of government (Heinz 2000). Additionally, metropolitan areas comprising different federal states like Hamburg, Berlin/Brandenburg or Halle/Leipzig cannot be structured by a regional authority. In Stuttgart this solution was discussed as well but not realized in the end. Nevertheless, the regional parliament of Stuttgart is very autonomous and provided with a lot of competences, tasks and resources.

In Berlin and Dresden the European RITTS-projects followed a city network approach to bring together different regional actors. Many publications in Social and Economic Science indicated that in the world of globalization decentralised networks are a crucial tool for increasing the rate of innovation and enhancing progress on new technologies. The decentralised network approach also has the advantage that the innovation policy can realise multiplier effects by involving more actors than a traditional centralised approach.

Hence, the degree of institutionalization varies greatly in Germany. The ranking in figure 4 is based on the comparison of competences, tasks, resources and the legitimation of the regional cooperation structure. On a continuum from very low to very high institutionalization, the areas can be placed in the following order:

Figure 4: Degree of institutionalization at the metropolitan level



Referring to the three approaches of metropolitan reform, public choice and new regionalism mentioned by Kübler (2003), we can summarize that all of them are observable in the biggest metropolitan areas of Germany. Currently the new regionalism takes wide space in the theoretical discussion as well in the United States (Downs 1994, Rusk 1995, Savitch/Vogel 2000) as in Europe (Van den Berg et al. 1993, Le Galès 1995, Benz 2001). One advantage of this approach is the result that it is not possible **to give advice** for the best form of regional cooperation. Rather the researchers recognise that each metropolitan area needs its special solution. The comparison of the cooperation forms in Germany confirms the impression that the structure depends on the particular spatial condi-

tions and problems in a single region. These conditions determine the competences and tasks of the association and the conflicts it has to handle.

On the other hand, the possibilities of cooperation are not unlimited (Benz 2003). Heinz et al. (2004) mentioned nine models of discussed metropolitan cooperation in Germany, which differ in size, involved actors, competences, tasks, resources, legitimation and consequences for existing political-administrative structure. Regarding the analyzed areas, five models occur: city networks, regional conferences, special-purpose local planning associations, multiple-purpose regional planning associations and strong institutionalized associations. Neighbourhood associations exist as well, but not as the most important cooperation model in the nine urban agglomerations (table 3). The three models "Communautés urbaines", regional district or regional municipality are often discussed, but not realized yet.

Table 3: Discussed reform models in Germany

	city networks	regional conference	neighbourhood association	special-purpose local planning association	multiple purpose regional planning association	strong institutionalized association	communautés urbaines	single regional district	single regional municipality
size	depend on tasks and actors	depend on tasks and actors	boundaries of core city and partly of counties	boundaries of involved municipalities	boundaries of existing regional associations	boundaries of core city and counties	urban agglomeration	boundaries of involved municipalities	boundaries of involved municipalities
actors	public & private	public & private	public	public	public	public	public	public	public
competences	no decision and implementation competence	no decision and implementation competence	strict competence several policies possible	task overlapping possible, only land-use planning	task overlapping possible, several policies	task overlapping possible, several policies	task overlapping possible, multiple policies	strict task competence possible, multiple policies	strict competence multiple policies
tasks	planning coordination	planning coordination	planning consulting	planning coordination implementation	planning coordination	planning coordination implementation	planning coordination implementation	planning coordination implementation	planning coordination implementation
resources	variable, diverse	variable, diverse	allocation	allocation, contribution, fees	regional allocation federal state support	regional allocation federal state grants	share of regional allocation, local tax	allocation, fees, grants	allocation, fees, grants
legitimation	self-constituted	self-constituted	indirectly	indirectly	indirectly	directly	indirectly	directly	directly
consequences for structures	no	no	no	no	no	no	no	re-organisation	re-organisation
metropolitan area	<b>Dresden</b>	<b>Berlin/ Brandenburg Hamburg</b>	existing model	<b>Munich Halle/ Leipzig</b>	<b>Dortmund/ Essen Frankfurt</b>	<b>Stuttgart Hanover</b>	not existing model	not existing model	not existing model

Source: Heinz et al. (2004: 158), final row MWR.

An important task for the future is therefore to specify relevant conditions for certain cooperation forms. In the concept of new regionalism one important factor is seen in the **definition of frameworks** for regional cooperation through the higher political-administrative levels. The RITTS program in Dresden and Berlin/Brandenburg are good examples of regional cooperation initiatives from higher political levels. The second condition is seen in **strong leadership** which is able to develop regional visions like a single entrepreneur with sufficient financial resources or a charismatic, influential mayor who can convince other actors to participate in the project of regional development. In the metropolitan areas

of Lyon and Bordeaux regional governance was reached by strong leadership of local elites (Jouve/Lefèvre 1999). But these elites cannot handle all tasks by themselves. Many responsibilities are under the control of other public authorities or private business firms, so cooperation and negotiation is still necessary. On the other hand the new regionalism approach is criticised because of the lack of legitimation. The loose coupled networks of entrepreneurship are not legitimated by the citizenry because it is not necessary that they are public bodies. But political legitimation resp. participation is until today connected with political jurisdictions in certain territories (Heinz 2000; Benz 2001).

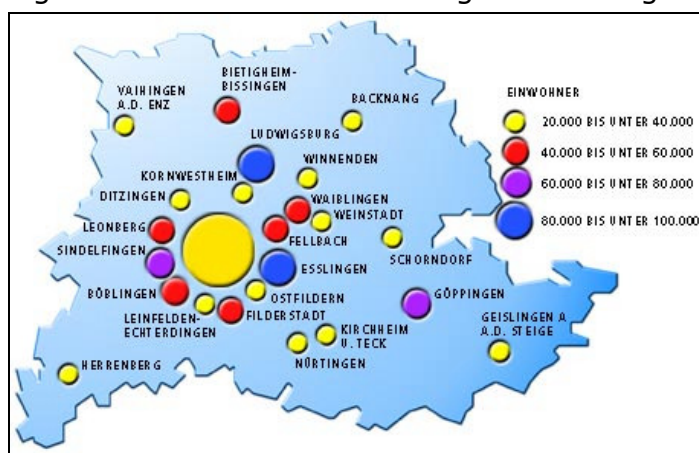
Maybe the next chapter gives an answer to this dilemma. The following remarks demonstrate that the Association Region Stuttgart combines the demands of all three approaches. With the Association and the formation of a directly elected Regional Assembly the region is quite strongly institutionalized (metropolitan reform). Nevertheless some regional tasks still show functional overlapping of competing jurisdictions (public choice) and there exist as well different informal networks working on regional development (new regionalism). The first part of this contribution can hence only be a starting point for the analysis of metropolitan governance in Germany. More detailed research is necessary to understand the work of metropolitan governance structures in practice and to answer questions about implementation speed, acceptance of the reform and the political, organizational results.

## **2. Reform development and implementation process in the metropolitan area of Stuttgart**

The metropolitan area of Stuttgart – the capital of Baden-Wuerttemberg – will serve as an example for reform development and implementation processes to answer questions about conditions for regional cooperation, implementation speed, acceptance of the reform and the political and organizational fallout resulted. Stuttgart is a very useful instance of metropolitan governance regarding complexity. The concept of governance is defined by a form of self-regulation which is based on the voluntary cooperation of actors, but additionally characterized by political control and management as well as by formal organizational and operational rules (Fürst 2003). The specific mixture of structural and procedural elements is typical for metropolitan governance and resulted from formal organizational reform and adaptation of the cooperation forms to specific regional problems. This interaction of reform politics and cooperative regional politics is characteristic for Greater Stuttgart (Steinacher 2002; Benz 2003).

Already at the beginning of the 1970s the negative consequences of the suburbanization process were observable in the urban agglomeration of Stuttgart. Contrary to other middle size conurbations the core city is surrounded by a ring of economic prospering cities. Because of this polycentric structure, city-suburb conflicts known from other metropolitan areas become very pronounced and the complexity between the core city and the suburbs is very intensive. An overview regarding the current inhabitant figures in the region of Stuttgart demonstrates the polycentric structure (figure 5). The ring of strong, middle-sized cities around the capital of Baden-Wuerttemberg with 590.112 inhabitants has approximately the same number of inhabitants.

Figure 5: Inhabitants in the region of Stuttgart



Source: [www.region-stuttgart.org](http://www.region-stuttgart.org)

The reform politics of regional cooperation has a relatively long tradition in the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, especially in the region of Stuttgart (Heinz et al. 2004). At the beginning of the 1970s the core city lost population and business firms to the suburbs and with it the basis of tax revenues (Walter-Rogg 2004a). Important tasks like the development of a regional infrastructure could not be realized because of conflicts about the share of costs between the municipalities. So a regional planning community and in 1972 the Association "Mittlerer Neckar" had been founded. These associations were not able solve the problems because the interests of the particular local authorities dominated the discussions and not the development of Greater Stuttgart. In the case of decisions, single non-cooperative municipalities delayed or inhibited the implementation process. The situation got worse at the beginning of the 1990s when the region faced an employment collapse and the European integration process lead to a strong interregional competition (Iwer/Dispan 1999). Actors of the federal state, the greater region, the business firms, the media and especially the core city of Stuttgart claimed the constitution of a strong regional cooperation form with extensive competences. After the federal state election in 1992 the new govern-

ment (coalition of Christian and Social Democrats) started intensive regional reform politics and adopted laws for "the strengthening of cooperation in the Region of Stuttgart" and for "the constitution of the Association Region Stuttgart". As a consequence of this federal state reform politics the Verband (= "Association") Region Stuttgart was founded in 1994 and gave the region a political organisation with its own directly elected representatives of the population: the **Regional Assembly**. This democratically legitimated decision-making body covers the central planning policies - regional, infrastructure, landscape, traffic and transport - as well as business promotion, local public transport, waste management and tourist marketing. With a 2/3-majority the Association can accept as voluntary tasks the sponsorship and coordination of culture and sports events, trade fairs and exhibitions with regional importance. The Stuttgart Region includes the state capital of Stuttgart and the surrounding districts of Böblingen, Esslingen, Göppingen, Ludwigsburg and Rems-Murr - altogether 179 towns and communities. The central aim of the association is to marshal the forces of the independent municipalities within the Stuttgart conglomeration in order to enable the region to compete effectively at the European and the world level.

Like other multiple-purpose associations in Germany the Association has no dependent financial resources. The work is partly financed by a regional contribution (10.7 million € in 2005) from the towns and communities. The costly local transport is financed by a contribution from the core city of Stuttgart and districts incorporated into the VVS network (58.4 million €), as well as from the Federal Republic and the State (56.2 million €). The Verband widens its financial leeway by activating promotional and third party funds in the amount of three digit millions, such as through EU and federal competition, for example. These funds are used as a starter for further innovations ([www.region-stuttgart.org](http://www.region-stuttgart.org)).

The following chapters contain a description and discussion of the political and organizational fallout of the regional reform politics in the last decade for the special case of Greater Stuttgart and try to give an answer about conditions for successful regional governance.

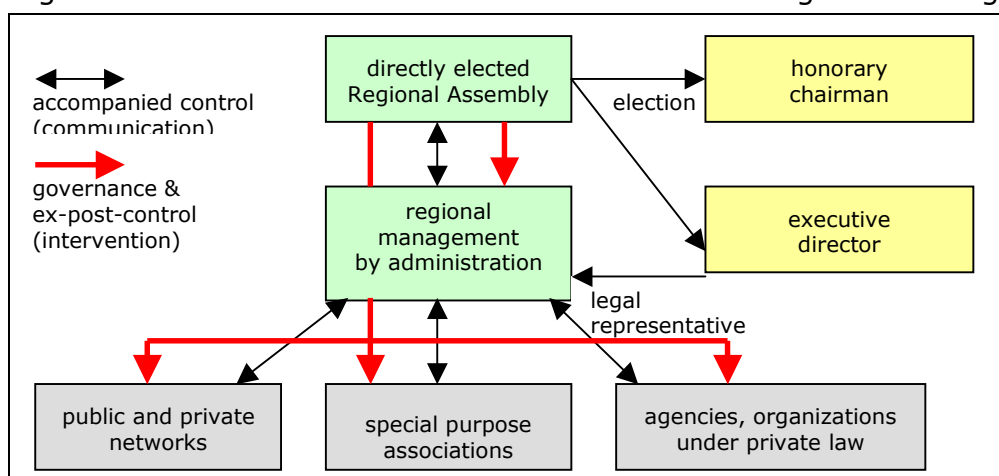
## **2.1. Governance and control structure of the reform model**

Formally the "Verband Region Stuttgart" is a public body ("Körperschaft des Öffentlichen Rechts") with restricted regional tasks (Steinacher 2002). In contrast to the districts and municipalities of Baden-Wuerttemberg, the Association has two heads: the honorary Chairman of the assembly is elected by the Regional Assembly and presides over its sessions. The Executive Director is the legal representative of the Verband and carries out the decisions of the Regional Assembly. He is elected as a civil servant for a period of eight years by the regional

councillors. The institutional framework in which these two persons lead regional cooperation consists of three elements: the competence to device regional planning, the combination of responsibility for regional planning and other important regional tasks, and the constitution of a directly legitimated regional parliament. Hence, regional cooperation is embedded in a hierarchical structured core institution (Benz 2003: 506; Steinacher 2002).

For experts it is the combination of several structural elements which characterizes the regional governance in the region of Stuttgart. Namely the collaboration of hierarchy and cooperation, a lean management<sup>2</sup>, regional networks under the control of the Regional Assembly in which democratic legitimated majority decisions are possible. So in fact the Association displays an interesting mixture of majority democracy, hierarchical management structure, functional differentiated networks – respectively special organisations – and cooperative conflict management (Benz 2003: 511, see figure 6).

Figure 6: Governance and control structure in the Region of Stuttgart



Source: Benz (2003: 511)

The institutional solution encompasses a combination of ex-post-control by the Regional Assembly and accompanied control based on communication and coordination by the regional management. The executive director and his management subordinate in turn the political control by the Regional Assembly. One important problem of metropolitan governance – the “Negotiator’s Dilemma” (Lax/Sebenius 1986:39) can be solved with this institutional structure. In most cases, communities have to be responsive to their own local councils and citizenry, with the consequence that they will behave very carefully in supra-local policies and in the worst case deny regional cooperation. In the appraisal of Benz

<sup>2</sup> The regional team comprises about 70 staff and civil servants including the Stuttgart Region Economic Development Promotion Company (WRS) and those staff directly integrated into the Stuttgart Transport and Tariff Association (VVS).

(2003: 507) this situation can be avoided in Stuttgart because the regional cooperation occurs in "the shadow of hierarchy". If the negotiation process fails, the conflict can be solved by a superior institution, namely the Association Region Stuttgart. Because of his jurisdiction for regional planning the Association can force the suburban communities to prepare the conditions for this development. In the last decade there was no need for this, but it is very likely that the local authorities fear this possibility and therefore are open-minded for negotiation. Another important aspect for successful regional cooperation is that the Association Region Stuttgart, respectively the Regional Assembly, defines the regional overall concept ("Leitbild") and circulates these ideas all over the metropolitan area (Jouve/Lefèvre 1999). As a consequence, the creation of a regional identification of elites and citizenry is possible and the involved cities and towns have clear imaginations of the regional development plan. In the case of voluntary cooperation forms with weak institutional structures an overwhelming vision is rarely given. In practice the municipalities work together for special purposes and not on a wider regional development. Without the definition and monitoring function of a strong regional (political) institution, the negotiation process of the involved actors is much more complicated and their egoism much higher. In the fulfilling of its competences the Association takes up strategical as well as operational tasks, like modern administration concepts require (Benz 2003). The Regional Assembly is responsible for strategic decisions like the regional plan or the public transport concept. The administration of the Association under the leadership of the executive director tries to implement the strategical decisions in cooperation with many other actors. Therefore networking and network management is an important instrument for this task. Under the head of the Association a lot of initiatives, networks and associated companies were created in the last decades, all realizing regional development. These actors are more or less coupled with the Association (see chapter 2.4.). So this form of metropolitan governance has a lean management which is based on political-administrative control, whereas the operational tasks are delegated to relatively autonomous but with the Association closely connected actors. The control function is exercised by the Regional Assembly and the regional management with his director. The control instruments of the Assembly are strategic decisions, jurisdiction and budget, and the control instruments of the regional management are communication and cooperation. Experts from the Association work in these public and private networks and can thus control the implementation process. Despite the growing regional tasks in the last decade the management structure is very lean.

## **2.2. Implementation speed of the reform politics**

With the adoption of the federal state law about regional cooperation in 1994 the implementation speed increased very much compared to the years before. Nevertheless some actors had been very critical about the constitution of the regional Association like parts of the Christian Democrats or Free Voters or the involved municipalities and counties. In the two decades before, the implementation process had required much more time. In Baden-Wuerttemberg regional plans had been devised since 1973 and renewed at 10 to 15 year intervals - a process that had stretched over several years in many cases (Heinz et al. 2004). Regional planning is also currently no one-way street: municipalities and districts work together in the planning at several stages. There are also associations and authorities, chambers of commerce and unions to be heard. But in contrast to the past, only in very few instances no agreement is reached. In that case it is left to the directly elected regional representatives to decide and the reform process can go further (Benz 2003).

The implementation speed depends on the financial resources of the reform politics. The annual budget of the Association Region Stuttgart amounts to 260 million Euro in 2005 and comes almost exclusively from public funds in the form of transfers from county and municipal authorities and grants from the federal and the state governments. The largest item of expenditure is local public transport, which accounts for about 85 percent of the total budget. So a small amount of money could be given to other important reform tasks like media development or sustainability. Fortunately the Association was – much more than the former regional associations – able to activate subsidies for regional development projects. Nearly 155 million Euro have been acquired for innovation and employment in the last ten years for the Greater Region of Stuttgart (Steinacher 2004). This strengthened the reform process in some very important policy fields.

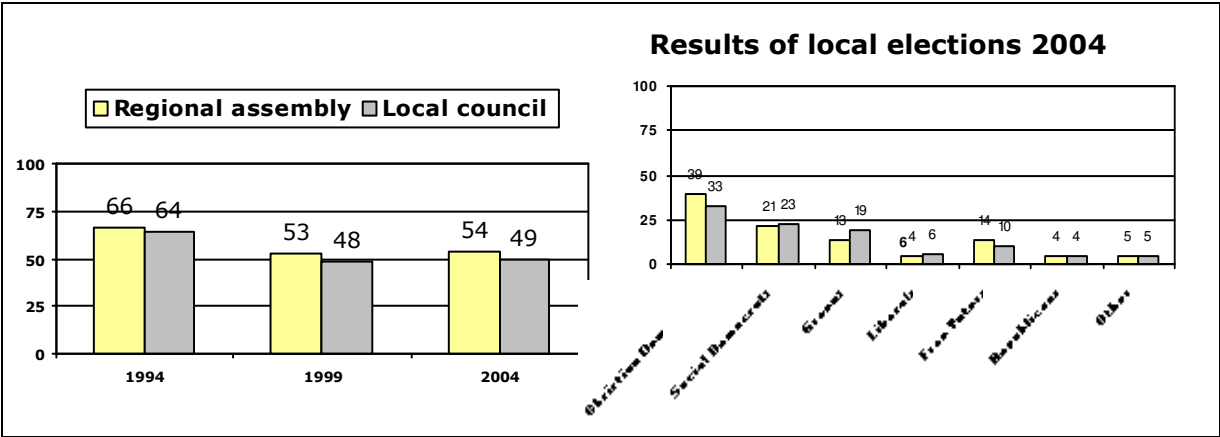
## **2.3. Acceptance of the reform politics**

In his summary of an international comparison between cooperations in urban agglomerations Heinz (2000: 22) mentioned different proponents and opponents of regional reform politics. These results will serve as a guideline to discuss the acceptance of the Stuttgart reform model on the part of elites and citizenry. In the five countries initiators and proponents of regional cooperation have been the central or federal government; the core cities and their representatives; the industry and its actors; and professionally involved actors and media. As opponents and critics the researchers identified middle-tier government and existing associations of local authorities; suburban governments and outlying communi-

ties; urban residents and population groups as well as experts. In the case of Stuttgart similar observations are possible.

The land of Baden-Wuerttemberg supported the need of regional cooperation and adopted in 1994 a state law for "reinforcing the cooperation in the region of Stuttgart". One reason for this decision was the necessity to strengthen Greater Stuttgart in a strong international inter-regional competition (Heinz et al. 2004). The City of Stuttgart faced rising problems of suburbanization like an increasing loss of economic capacity, population, and revenues which also advocated the regional cooperation. As did the local industry with big business firms like Daimler-Chrysler, Porsche or IBM, which were mostly interested in simplifying political and administrative structures for their projects. These economic prospering and regional developing aspects were transported and enforced by the local media (Steinacher 2002). The attitudes of political parties and their representatives differ very much in dependence of their affiliation to the various institutions. Members of the Regional Assembly and the federal state council (Landtag) have more positive orientations vis à vis the Association than members of the county council (Kreistag) or the local council of the core city (Stadtrat). Often the positions vary in dependence of the personalities, so generalizations can hardly be made.

Figure 7: Participation in regional and local elections in Stuttgart (in %)



Source: Association Region Stuttgart, City of Stuttgart

In the case of the citizenry we can expect that there is a relatively high acceptance of the new regional parliament. The citizens do not have to fear a loss of democratic control with the new political and administrative level because the regional assembly is directly legitimated. In 2004, the population of Greater Stuttgart decided for the third time on the composition of their Regional Assembly, and elected 90 representatives for a 5-year-term. The comparison between the participation in local and regional elections shows a slightly higher rate of participation at the regional level (see figure 7). This result do not indicate necessarily a higher interest of the citizenry in the regional level, because in differ-

ence to the local council where foreigners from EU countries are allowed to vote, only Germans can participate at regional elections. The results of the different political parties are as well very similar at the local and the regional level. Like in the city council of Stuttgart there is a domination of the Christian Democrats.

The promoters of the regional cooperation spent a lot of time to convince the population that the regional level is an important economic and living area. The concept "Portal Region Stuttgart" summarizes the Association Region Stuttgart and some other associations like the "Culture Region Stuttgart", the "Sports Regions Stuttgart", the "Dialog Forum of the churches" or the gender-oriented association "FrauenRatschlag" which represent the interests of the citizenry. The "Forum Region Stuttgart" is another non-party regional association giving information about "the real regional picture" and supporting citizen engagement. In this association elites from different sectors like politics, economy, culture, education, churches, media or environment give awards to people, projects or institutions which enhance the regional image, structure or solidarity. One special annual award was created for civic engagement referring to culture, sport or society. The existence of this regional cooperation of multiple actors from the political-administrative and civic sphere leads to the conclusion that one important aim of the "Portal Region Stuttgart" is to support a sustainable regional development together with the citizenry. Because many regional experts are involved in the "Portal Region Stuttgart" their acceptance of the regional cooperation seems as well relatively high. On the other hand this does not automatically imply an acceptance of the reform politics by the Association Region Stuttgart. Some experts criticise the powerlessness of the Association and the reduced transparency of responsibilities for the citizenry and promote other (weaker) solutions for regional cooperation (Henke 1994).

In 1998 the Federal State Ministry of Economic started a region-wide survey about the acceptance of the reform model in Stuttgart. Concerning the acceptance of the suburban communities and counties the survey noticed some criticism of these actors, mainly focused on the share of the costs for big regional projects like the regional retail industry or the new fair outside the core city. The costs for the regional level amount to 50 million Euro for this fair project, which have to be shared by all municipalities involved in the Association. The strong dependency in the financial structure evokes resistance by the municipalities because they have increasing fiscal constraints and additionally financial allocations with other associations. Some municipalities filed a lawsuit against the share of costs for projects at the regional level - and this although the regional allocation only amounts to ten percent of the Association's budget (Heinz et al. 2004: 44).

Besides the regional financial allocation, there are some conflicts caused by the formal jurisdiction for several regional tasks like the public transport or retail industry. The suburbs force the settlement of big economic centres in their area, the core city of Stuttgart and the Association Region Stuttgart vote against this "americanization of the suburbs" (Steinacher 1998). Furthermore, the counties involved in the Association and the federal state government criticize the regional cooperation because they fear a loss of competences and power and see problems of jurisdiction as well. Several examples of mixed jurisdiction lead to the current situation and conflicts concerning for example public transport or sewage disposal. In the metropolitan area of Stuttgart eight actors are responsible for the tasks of public transport: the federal state, the Association Region Stuttgart, the city of Stuttgart and the five counties (Steinacher 2002).

Despite these critics, the results of the survey of the Ministry of Economics (1998) along with several interviews with local experts indicate a growing acceptance of the reform model "Association Region Stuttgart". Nevertheless the regional reform politics is not at its end, the local and regional experts are still discussing several cooperation models for Greater Stuttgart (Heinz et al. 2004).

#### **2.4. The political and organizational results of the reform politics**

Experienced by ten years of regional cooperation, the director of the Association sees two limits of voluntary cooperation: One being financial resources, and two local competencies (Steinacher 1998). If financial resources are available, cooperation projects can be put into action, but in current situations each actor defends his competency and responsibility. Important preconditions for realizing common regional projects are seen in the allocation of financial resources and sufficient capacities of influence. Steinacher mentioned that for the Region of Stuttgart two different kinds of cooperation are applicable: The reinforcing of regional collaboration and the implementation of an autonomous regional level for certain problem solutions. In his opinion, the former is successful in network projects which generate new products and services in the region. This applies accordingly to the network of municipalities which can only handle its tasks in a reinforced cooperation at the regional level. But this is not the reason for structural changes in contest and conflict situations. Although the living conditions require a consequent regional management (e.g. for a regional transport concept) existing associations of local and federal state authorities obstruct this development. Nevertheless, the Association Region Stuttgart claimed additional rights and allocation-free revenues in the past. In the year 1999 the Baden-

Wuerttemberg Landtag - the state assembly - passed an amendment Act in October granting the Association Region Stuttgart some additional rights. The organizational results of the reform politics in Greater Stuttgart were very extensive (see figure 8). The work in business promotion, tourism marketing, and the coordination of local public transport is handled – in collaboration with other regional organisations and companies – by private-sector subsidiary companies. The administration of the Association participated with the support of the Regional Assembly in the foundation of these organisations and companies. The Association is a regular member and coordinates their activities with the regional politics of his own management. Only one year after the constitution of the Association a subsidiary company to strengthen regional economic development and tourist marketing was build up (WRS). The temporary loss of over 100.000 jobs between 1992 and 1997 was a clear warning to the region of Stuttgart which had become accustomed to success. To forestall the threatened loss of further jobs well in time the WRS set up the Regional Employment Agency (Rebag). Its task is to inform companies at risk and their staff in good time of political instruments in the labour market and to work out their own initiatives. Beyond these examples there is a company for marketing and tourism consisting of the Association Region Stuttgart, the core city of Stuttgart and 20 other municipalities. The Association is a shareholder in this company like in some others.

Figure 8: New structures and actors at the metropolitan level of Stuttgart

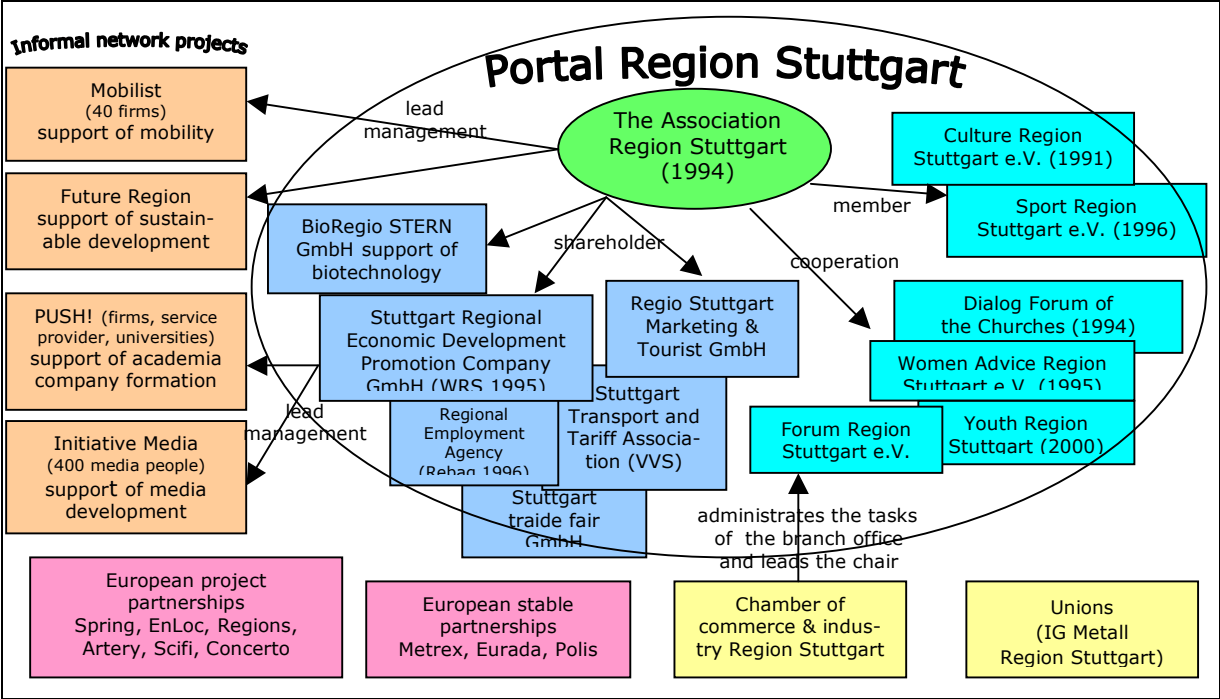


Figure MWR, www.region-stuttgart.org

The strategy of the Association is furthermore to act as a mediator between network partners with the same ambition, namely the development of the metropolitan area. After successfully activating and creating the networks the projects run on their own with the lead management either in the hands of the Association (Mobilist, BioRegio, Future Region) or the WRS (PUSH!, Initiative Media). Moreover the Association has stable European partnerships with Metrex, Eurada and Polis as well as some European project partnerships like Spring or Enloc.

Besides these mostly economic oriented networks, local and social initiatives build up which support the regional idea and realize projects on behalf of their interests. The Association cooperates very closely with all of them; in some it, it is a member. The citizens' initiative "Forum Region Stuttgart" will serve as a communication forum for regional interests. It was initiated by the president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and for that the Chamber administrates the tasks of the branch office and leads the chair. Their members support cultural, sportive, scientific, ecological and innovative ideas to enhance the importance of Greater Stuttgart. Simultaneously the Association has created its own forum „Future Region of Stuttgart“ which organizes the Local Agendas 21 in the region. This led to an award being presented by the Federal Republic's Ministry of Housing and Construction in 1998 entitled „Region of the Future“.

Notwithstanding the advantages and the good performance of the Association, the reform politics is not finished yet. Most actors support the necessity and resistance of the Association, but discuss several future changes as well. Some proponents like business firms and unions require a higher task concentration in the Association; critics like the suburban municipalities want to conserve the status quo (Iwer/Dispan 1999). The mayor of Stuttgart supports the French solution, because the "Communautés Urbaines" are responsible for multiple tasks and can raise their own taxes. Others, like the representatives of the counties or of the association of municipalities, want to reorganise the Association into a special-purpose association and want to abolish the Regional Assembly (Heinz et al. 2004).

Besides the dispute about more or less competences, resources or institutionalization, there is the question concerning the size of the regional territory. In the argumentation of some critics the regional tasks overlap the territorial space of the core city and the five counties around. As a consequence these people demand an enlargement of the Greater Region. Similar to this is the idea of a "regional municipality", which includes the abandonment of existing counties and the lead management of the Association Region Stuttgart, or the creation of a "regional county" in which the counties are retained and the core city loses its county-free status. The advocates of a regional district want a sharp separation

between local and regional tasks and require regional steering, bundling, and supra-local control functions on an independent financial basis (Heinz et al. 2004). The former mayor of Stuttgart supported the first solution and the director of the Association voted for the latter. In these perspectives the definition of a metropolitan area needn't to be oriented by existing counties. It seems to be more fruitful to refer to real urban phenomena which lead to serious problems (Steinacher 2002). Indeed, the current definition of the Federal Office for Building and Planning is based on the commuter changes of a Region. In this definition not 179 municipalities with 2.6 million inhabitants are involved in the metropolitan area of Stuttgart, but 121 with 3.4 million inhabitants (see Walter-Rogg 2004b).

Despite all discussions about future developments of the Association Region Stuttgart, the budget structure commission of the land Baden-Wuerttemberg put recently forward a proposal for reforming state administration without regarding county boundaries or city/region cooperations. Instead, the commission suggests to enhance the medium tier of state government and the county levels. So the reform debate is still going on. "As in the past, a reform would therefore be adopted that invites new reform recommendations even at the time of its implementation" (Heinz et al. 2004: 15).

#### **4. The agenda for future metropolitan governance research**

In this article only few aspects referring to questions on regional reform models and their fruitfulness in Germany could be discussed. Based on information about tasks, competences, resources and legitimation, the analysis of cooperation models in the biggest metropolitan areas showed several possibilities on a continuum from weak to strong institutionalized solutions. The range goes from loose purpose-oriented networks (Dresden) and state-run regional planning (Berlin/Brandenburg, Munich) over state-run local mixtures (Hamburg, Halle/Leipzig) to strong institutionalized associations at the regional level (Frankfurt, Dortmund/Essen, Stuttgart, Hanover). As a result we can conclude that the cooperation structure obviously depends on the particular spatial conditions and problems in a single region. These conditions determine the competences and tasks of the association and the conflicts it has to handle. So once more it is evident that metropolitan areas with various economic, societal and cultural conditions require different solutions. One important aspect is surely the tradition and experience of existing regional cooperations at the regional level (vgl. Heinz et al. 2004).

Regional politics in the metropolitan area of Stuttgart demonstrate that reform is an ongoing process which requires the consideration of different preferences and aims of involved actors. Although all of them support an efficient and sustainable development of their metropolitan area, their egoism often blockade ambitious concepts. Stuttgart is a good example of "regional governance" coordinated by a strong institutionalized core institution. For several tasks strong leadership is given, but in realizing governance the Association functions as well as a mediator and "networker" between public and private-sector actors which are less formally organized. Because of this institutional structure combined with lean management and network strategies, the reform model of Stuttgart is in the judgment of researchers one of the most interesting and effective (Benz 2003).

Two other important aspects were given in the case of Stuttgart, namely the definition of a framework for regional cooperation from a higher political-administrative level and a relatively long tradition of regional cooperation (Steinacher 2002). The realization of the metropolitan governance structure was therefore a specific combination of state reform politics (top-down) and cooperation in the Greater Region of Stuttgart (bottom-up). It was the right point in time for a change under a big coalition of Christian and Social Democrats, but political changes are not sufficient. In addition a region needs some effective proponents to push the idea of a prospering metropolitan area. This development can be supported, not enforced, by attractive institutional solutions (Benz 2003: 512).

For future research on regional governance the task is to specify more precisely relevant conditions for cooperation forms. Additionally the political control of relatively autonomous networks and companies as well as the quality of democratic legitimation should be analyzed in more detail in the future. All in all more systematic, comparative and longitudinal work is necessary to give answers about the creation and practice of regional governance. The Institute of Social Science at the University of Stuttgart is member of the **International Metropolitan Observatory** project initiated by Vincent Hoffmann-Martinot (CERVL-CNRS/IEP Bordeaux) und Jefferey Sellers (University of Southern California, Los Angeles). One aim of this cooperation is to study the relation between context and the construction of both general-purpose metropolitan governments and cooperation around specific policy questions. 2004 was the starting point for a comparative analysis of 74 metropolitan regions in Germany. During the next years multiple context indicators will be collected to examine the structural and political conditions and changes in these areas. Therefore the IMO project is an important instrument for more systematic and longitudinal research on regional governance in Germany and for relating these results to an international perspective.

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