

Metropolitan Governance in the Czech Republic¹

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Introduction

The urban spaces nowadays seem to be in constant flux (Harvey 1989). Metropolization is an important part of that that motion. As the metropolitan areas continue to develop all around the globe, the issue of metropolitan governance is gaining the prominence. The very nature of metropolises - the fact that they are urban structures that exceed the boundaries of the individual cities - make the question: "How to govern such units?" topical, practical as well as interesting from the social science point of view. The rise of the cities and metropolises, however, is not particularly new phenomenon, and so the question about how to administer them. Historically, we can most often observe the rise of the cities and the periodical adjustment of the city territory to the actual city size. This has been quite usual strategy used in practically any part of the world, being it the United States (Hamilton 2004), China (Ma and Cui 1987), Germany or Eastern Europe (Baldersheim et al (1996).

The appearance of suburbanization processes, more precisely the existence of suburban communes, which were intentionally designed for not being part of the central city but rather independent municipalities, have broken the usual cycle of city growth and subsequent city area enlargement. The growing administrative fragmentation of the urban spaces gave birth to the metropolitan governance debate. For a long time, the debate was the clash of two opposing camps. "Polycentrists" defended the administrative fragmentation of the metropolitan areas claiming that fragmented structures offered more choices for the local inhabitants and increase competition among local governments, which will lead to decrease of government cost. The "centrists" opposed such argument declaring that large consolidated city area and correspondingly large uniform government is better as it "capture, efficiencies in economies of scale, ad agglomeration of talent, internalize externalities, promote fiscal equity, [and] facilitate more efficient coordination of land use and facility planning,.." (Nelson and Foster 1999, p. 309). The debate was basically about the *structure of the governmen*, till about

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1990's when completely new perspective - mostly referred as "new regionalist" - appeared (Kubler and Heinelt 2005). New regionalists argued that the key is the good *governance* in the metropolitan areas that does not necessarily depend on the actual territorial structure of government (Savitch and Vogel 2000). The concept of governance is connected rather with processes and functions than the government structures, and has been defined as "functional and issue-oriented approach to addressing problems of a regional nature" that "includes functional arrangements of services, how regional policy issues are addressed, and the extent and processes of regional cooperation" (Hamilton 1999, p. 33). Thus, the study the governance is not concerned exclusively about the governments about the whole networks of policy relevant actors that are usually "heterogeneous conglomerates of actors and agencies with various backgrounds and competencies who define and deliver urban services a way that is independent from the territorial boundaries and traditional government structures" (Kubler and Heinelt 2005, p. 10).

This paper is aimed to analyze contemporary situation in the metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic from the government/governance point of view. How the Czech metropolises are governed? To what extent the metropolitan governance is constrained/supported by the existing settlement system and the sub-national public administration in the Czech Republic? How the metropolitan government structures look like and what is the role of more broadly defined governance? To what extent the current system is dependent on historical development of the metropolitan governance? Have the situation changed after the breakdown of Communist rule in the 1989 and, if yes, to which direction? Before we try to answer these questions we believe that it is necessary to provide reader with the basic facts about the settlement system and the system of territorial administration in the Czech Republic and the historical development of the of the four largest Czech cities and their administration. After that we could concentrate on the main topic of the paper, which is the post-1989 development of Czech metropolitan areas, including both government structures and the governance modes. Finally, we attempt to generalize our observations.

1. The settlement system and the sub-national public administration in the Czech Republic

As for its size, the Czech Republic with a population of 10.3 million (2001) and surface area of 77 thousand square kilometers ranks among the smaller European countries. Average

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population density is 132 persons/km². A peculiar feature of the country's settlement system is its fragmentation. The Republic is covered by a scattered network of settlements – a dense net of villages and small to medium-sized towns, more-or-less evenly distributed over its whole territory. The number of settlements - irrespective of whether they have the status of municipalities - reached almost 16 thousand in 1990s (more up-to-date data are not available, but there are reasons to believe that this number is rather stable). Obviously, a country with such scattered settlement structures is susceptible to fragmentation of local government. Indeed, of the 6,249 municipalities, which existed in 2004, 79 % were very small places with population below one thousand and 26 % did not even reach 200 inhabitants. The median size of a municipality was just 382 inhabitants (data for 2001).

Table 1. Municipalities according to population size (as of 2004)

Population size	Municipalities		Population	
	n	%	N	%
0 - 199	1 642	26,3	201 862	2,0
200 - 499	2 018	32,3	655 426	6,4
500 - 999	1 291	20,7	900 139	8,8
1 000 - 1 999	664	10,6	918 935	9,0
2 000 - 4 999	370	5,9	1 133 479	11,1
5 000 - 9 999	133	2,1	911 787	8,9
10 000 - 19 999	68	1,1	957 807	9,4
20 000 - 49 999	41	0,7	1 205 631	11,8
50 000 - 99 999	17	0,3	1 212 713	11,9
100 000+	5	0,1	2 113 676	20,7
Total Czech Republic	6 249	100,0	10 211 455	100,0

Source: Malý lexikon obcí České republiky 2004, Prague: ČSÚ.

75 % inhabitants live in urban municipalities of which there are 526, the majority in small or middle-size towns, plus further percentage in metropolitan areas outside the largest cities. There are just five cities whose population exceeds 100 thousand. Capital Prague, with its nearly 1.2 million inhabitants (representing 11.6 % of the country's total population), and the primacy ratio reaching 3:1, is far the largest city in the Czech Republic.

The present two-tier system of sub-national public administration in the Czech Republic is the outcome of a systemic reform started in 1990 and continuing until the first years of the 21st century. The reform was component part of the country's overall deep political, economic and social restructuring which followed after the 1989 demise of the communist regime. The approaching accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union, particularly expectations of the EC as regards the country's ability to participate in the Union's regional policy, have prompted finalization of the reform. Although the evolution of public

administration which has constantly to adapt to new tasks and changing circumstances is a never ending process, after fifteen years of restructuring a situation was reached in the Czech Republic when the system of territorial public administration has been more-or-less stabilized.

The reform was implemented in three steps (Illner 2003a). The aim of *the first step*, approximately between 1990-1993, was to establish a democratic representative municipal government and to delegate some state administration functions to local government bodies (Vajdová 2003). The first Act on Municipalities took effect in November 1990 and soon thereafter the first democratic municipal elections have installed first Councilors and first Mayors into their functions. Codification of the basic rules of the new system, democratic local elections and the creation of new local bodies were the main accomplishments, followed by legislation dealing mainly with the financial regulations of local government, its property, legal supervision and other issues. The status of territorial self-government was also anchored in the new republican Constitution, adopted in December 1992.

In the *second step* of the reform, extending till 2001, the regional government was rebuilt. First, in 1997, the country was divided into thirteen regions plus the capital Prague, which too has the status of a region, and later - in 2000, further legislation introduced a new system of regional public administration. The first regional elections were held in late 2000 and the new regional authorities started to function since 2001 (in Prague the elections took place in 2002).

The aim of *the third step* of the reform process was to terminate the functioning of District Offices (the territorial branches of general state administration) at the end of 2002 that became superfluous after the establishment of regions. Their functions and powers were transferred to municipalities and to regions.

Sub-national public administration in the Czech Republic has two arms: state administration, and territorial self-government. *State administration* is characterized by its limited autonomy in decision-making, vertical hierarchy, prevalent monocratic way of decision-making and the fact that most positions are taken by appointment. *Territorial self-government* is an expression of the right of population living in a territory to independently manage the territorial affairs within the scope defined in the Constitution and legislation. The basic status of territorial self-government has been laid down in the 1992 Constitution of the Czech Republic which stipulated that in terms of the territorial self-government the territory of the country is divided into municipalities which are the basic territorial self-governing units, and regions which are the higher level territorial self-governing units. They are

independently administered by their elected Councils - Municipal and Regional respectively, while other self-government bodies are derived from the Councils. The territorial self-governing units are corporations of public law entitled to possess their own property and manage financial means according to their own budget. The territorial self-government is not vertically hierarchical and its authorities are not subordinated to the state which can intervene in territorial self-government only in cases provided by law and for reasons of upholding the law.

Thus, on the territorial level, tasks are executed pertaining both to the state administration as well as to the territorial self-government. The two sets of responsibilities are separated and they cannot infringe upon one another. Two institutional mechanisms are applied to discharge responsibilities of the territorial state administration: some responsibilities are executed by *deconcentrated territorial agencies* of central state's authorities, while the exercise of other responsibilities is entrusted by law to *territorial self-governing authorities* – to all regional governments and to municipal governments in larger municipalities - which discharge them on behalf of the state. Each of such self-governing authorities has thus to exercise two distinct sets of responsibilities: their *independent powers* in the sphere of self-government, and powers of state administration delegated to them by law - *the delegated powers*. This *integrated* (combined, fused) *model* of the territorial public administration has a long tradition in the Czech Lands. Its advantage is that it reduces or helps to avoid the duplication of administrative authorities in the territories.

Municipalities are legal entities with the right to their own property, own incomes and an independent budget. They execute self-government and can exercise also some functions of state, if entrusted to them by law. With respect to self-government, the powers of municipalities - their *own responsibilities* - include matters which are in the interest of the municipality and its citizens, unless such matters are entrusted by law to regions or belong to the transferred responsibilities of the municipality. In general, this means that a municipality cares for the creation of conditions for the development of social welfare and the fulfillment of citizens' needs, particularly in the fields of housing, protection and improvement of health, transport and communications, education, culture, and protection of public order. Alongside self-government, some state administrative tasks can be delegated to municipalities by legal acts, constituting their *transferred responsibility*. Municipalities are obliged to execute such responsibilities on behalf of the state and are responsible for their execution to the respective state administrative bodies. For the exercise of the transferred responsibilities they receive

contributions from the state budget. Municipal Offices in selected municipalities can be entrusted with the exercise of the transferred responsibilities also in other municipalities within their micro-regions.

Municipal self-government is vested with representative organs - *Municipal Councils* that are elected every four years by local citizens and which are the highest decision-making bodies of local government in the sphere of its independent powers. A Council elects from among its own members a collective political executive body – the *Municipal Board* – which is responsible for the execution of tasks within the independent responsibility of a municipality and, if entrusted to it by law, as well within the transferred powers. The Council also elects from among its members a *Mayor* who reports to the Municipal Council. The Czech Republic is the only country in east-central Europe where all Mayors are elected indirectly.

Municipal Offices in selected municipalities have been entrusted with the execution of transferred powers in other municipalities within the surrounding region. Three partly overlapping categories of municipalities can be distinguished according to the extent of these functions and the size of the territories where they are discharged: 1. municipalities where just single responsibilities are involved, 2. municipalities with so-called *Commissioned Municipal Offices* executing a whole set of transferred powers in surrounding regions (383 municipalities), and 3. *Municipalities with Extended Powers* whose Municipal Offices enjoy a still larger number of transferred responsibilities and discharge them in larger administrative areas (205 urban municipalities).

The largest part of municipal government revenues (56 %) are drawn from taxes – those which proceed exclusively to municipal coffers (at present only the real estate tax) and those shared with the state (income taxes and VAT). All taxes, tax rates included, are decided by the Parliament and have the form of a law. Local governments may influence only the rate of the real estate tax and that of local fees, but only within certain limits given by the law. They have no say in determining the rates of other taxes, nor can they impose any locally specific taxes. The local governments' share of tax returns is determined in the laws on state budget. Beyond taxes, other revenues can be drawn by municipalities from independent local sources – local fees, proceeds from municipal property, transfers from organizations established by municipalities, profits from municipal activities, loans, donations etc. and also from state grants (subsidies). Municipalities exercising the transferred powers of state administration are entitled to a state contribution towards the execution of such powers. In contrast to their rather

strictly regulated revenues, municipalities enjoy considerable freedom as regards their spending. Among local government expenditures, education (mostly elementary schools) is usually the largest item in smaller municipalities.

Baldersheim et al. in their effort to compare the east central European local government systems with those in western Europe suggested that the Czech case corresponds to some extent more to the north European than the south European types. They also noted that it is distinguished by the functional consolidation, yet territorial fragmentation, as well as by the fused hierarchies (meaning the above-mentioned dual function setting) characteristic of an administrative-integrated model of local government (Baldersheim et al. 1996: 30, 40-41).

Regions – the higher level territorial self-governing units – are territorial communities of citizens with the right of self-government. They are legal entities with the right to its own property, own income and an independent budget. The integrated model of public administration applied also on the regional tier implies that a region executes on its territory both self-government, as expressed by its independent powers, as well as state administration, as manifested by the responsibilities transferred to it by law. In the exercise of the independent powers, the region is bound solely by law. State authorities can interfere only for reasons of upholding the law and in a manner delimited by law. The general task of regional government within its *independent powers* is to care about interests and development of the region and about interests of its citizens. More concretely, this involves complex territorial development of the region in the fields of spatial planning and regional development, education, culture, transport and communications, healthcare, social welfare, environment and protection of public order.

A region is administered independently by a *Regional Council*. Further bodies of the regional government are the *Regional Board*, the *President* of the region and the *Regional Office*. *Regional Council* is the highest decision-making body of regional government in the sphere of its independent responsibility. *Regional Board* is a collective political executive body of the region in the area of the independent responsibilities. It may also take decisions on matters within the transferred powers, but only if stipulated by law. The Board and *The President of region* are elected by the Councilors from among themselves. *Regional Office* as an administrative executive body of the region fulfils administrative tasks of the region, within the spheres of both the independent and the transferred responsibilities. The Office is headed by the *Director* and is divided into departments and other organizational units. The

Director reports to the President for the fulfillment of tasks assigned to the Office in the area of independent and transferred responsibilities.

Since 2002, the financing of regions has followed similar principles as that of municipalities. Among incomes of the regions the most important are tax revenues and shared tax revenues - income tax of juridical persons (if the region is itself the tax-payer), share of revenues collected on the national level from state taxes, namely the VAT, the income tax from dependent activities of physical persons, and subsidies from the state budget and state funds. Unlike the case of municipalities where the weight of own revenues is much higher, state subsidies represent a large and increasing part of all incomes collected by the regions which makes them highly dependent on the state budget.

A systemic issue, whose relevance is yet to be fully appreciated in the Czech Republic, is the fact that the currently existing nodes-centered administrative territories hardly offer a sufficient menu of options that would deal with the newly emerging territorial structures - such as metropolitan areas, agglomerations and urban regions, or structures, that by their nature are more networks than hierarchies, although such spaces are clearly gaining in importance.

One facet of the reform was its "European" context. As the country was endeavoring towards integration in West European international and supranational institutions – chiefly the European Union - adaptation to west European standards and expectations was one of the most important prerequisites to successful integration. The relevance of the European dimension for the reform of sub-national government was recognized only gradually in the Czech Republic - mostly during the later stage of the reform process, i.e. in the second half of the 1990s. Also the European bodies asserted their influence on the reform only gradually. The “European“ factor has been particularly relevant with respect to the intermediary-level government. Yet, although the decentralization reform and regionalization in the Czech Republic were influenced and sped up by expectations of the EU and of other European institutions, this process has been driven *above all internally* and cannot be viewed as just an adaptive effort intended to satisfy external requirements. The political intention to decentralize government and to regionalize the country was part of the democratization program of the early 1990s, long before the country applied for EU membership (Illner 2003b).

2. Historical development and the forms of governance in the four largest Czech metropolitan areas

2.1. Prague

Throughout most of its thousand years long history, Prague was actually not a single city, but a conglomerate of four separate towns – the „Towns of Prague“. Until the 1870s, when they started to be torn down, the territory of Prague or, rather of the Towns of Prague, had been physically demarcated by the city walls. In 1231-1240 the ramparts surrounded the Old Town (originally the Larger Town), enclosing the area of about 140 hectares. Some twenty years later, the Smaller Town, on the other side of the river Vltava, was walled, covering the area of approximately 20 hectares. A hundred years later, in 1320, the third town of Prague – Hradčany – was founded in the proximity of the Smaller Town and the Prague Castle and later also fortified. Its area was much smaller than that of the other towns of Prague. Then, in 1348, a major extension of this composite structure followed when the New Town of Prague was founded, adjacent to the already existing Old Town, but independent of it politically and separated from it by fortifications. Its area within the ramparts was about 360 hectares. Around 1370 the population of the Prague towns combined reached about 70 thousand.

Since the end of the 14th century the spatial growth of Prague, i.e. of the four Towns of Prague, was halted and the city area of some 550 hectares, did not change, with minor exceptions, until the second half of the 19th century. During some 500 years, Prague thus existed within its historical walls (reconstructed and slightly shifted outward in the 17th century) which had been designed sufficiently broadly to enable the city's development. The same area accommodated some 60 thousand people in 1600, about 80 thousand at the end of the 18th century and around 160 thousand in 1870. An important event, yet without implications regarding the city area, was the political and administrative amalgamation of the four Towns of Prague in 1784 into a single city.

The change came in the 19th century with the arrival of industrialization. The city limited by the fortifications and enjoying the dubious status of a military fortress could not offer sufficient space for the new factories and for accommodation of the immigrant laborers pouring in from the countryside. Satellite cities and townships started to grow since the 1840s outside of Prague, yet in the close proximity. Although functionally linked with Prague, such places – altogether eleven of them, were politically and administratively independent and had

their own names. Finally, since 1871, the Prague ramparts, which already lost the military value, started to give way to the new urban development. It took some twenty years for these massive baroque structures to be removed. In the meantime, the population of metropolitan area of Prague continued to grow quickly - between 1869 (when the first modern census was organized) and the last pre-war census in 1910 the population of the area increased from 250 thousands to 640 thousands. The political and administrative integration of the Prague area, which was made possible by the physical opening of the city, followed, however, very slowly. It has been completed as late as in 1920 when the Greater Prague was created by a special Law of the newly established Czechoslovak Republic.² Thirty seven neighboring urban and rural municipalities were incorporated and the area of Prague grew dramatically to 172 square kilometers. In 1921 its population reached 677 thousand.

Although municipalities merged with Prague lost their independence, the long-term tradition of decentralization led to the decision to continue some forms of locally based governing structures in the new city parts. The laws enabled to constitute so-called "local committees" as the elected representatives of the local interests, which obtained some powers and responsibilities in relation to management of local facilities and some local publicly-owned enterprises. Communists, who came to power in 1948 and subsequently completely changed the municipal governments to "national committees" respected to some extent the tradition of decentralized administration on the territory of Prague. The new special law about the Capitol of Prague³ that has been adopted in 1949 assumed that city districts would continue to exist and but the right to decided about them was transferred to the national government. National government, however, changed the powers and responsibilities of the "city district national committees", but left the actual delineation of Prague to city districts unchanged (Exner 2004).

Further three extensions of the city territory took place during the second half of the 20th century under the Communist government. In 1960, just a few smaller suburban municipalities were integrated. More important, however, was the change of the internal division of the Prague into city districts. Prague was newly divided into 10 city districts that were unambiguously designed to suppress the remnants of local identity of traditionally rich Prague boroughs. Exner (2004) mentions that the city district boundaries were designed is such a way that would assure the majority of workers' votes in every single city district. The

² Law No. 114/1920 Coll., on Greater Prague.

³ Law No. 76/1949 Coll.

next wave of administrative changes was conducted in 1968, when twenty-one municipalities were incorporated and the city area grew to 297 square kilometers. It is important to mention that in a political situation of late sixties it was not considered possible to completely destroy the local representation in municipalities that were merged with Prague, so it has been decided to give them a special status within the city. Thus, so called "local national committees" came into existence that became the third layer of the city administration (after the City Hall and city district national committees). Finally, in 1974, the most substantial of the recent expansions took place. Thirty municipalities were amalgamated and the city's administrative area reached 497 square kilometers. Although the situation in seventies was much less relaxed politically than that around the Prague Spring, the rulers decided to follow the same pattern and maintained local national committees in the merged municipalities.

It should be also noted that in the last case the extension of the city area was not an adjustment of the administrative structure to the city development but rather an attempt to prepare the administrative territory of the city for potential future development. In an unrealistic expectation of the coming population growth of Prague the communist authorities envisaged its increase to as much as 1,5 million inhabitants. Further mass housing estate construction in the open spaces on the urban fringe was planned and large tracts of undeveloped agricultural land were swallowed by the city. As the building plans of the planners did not materialize in reality (the population size only slightly overpass 1,2 million) the City of Prague inherited relatively large consolidated city area at the end of the Communist rule in 1989, which proved to be relevant factor in the subsequent development in the post-Communist period.

2.2. Brno

The second largest city in the Czech Republic, historical capital one of the three Czech historical lands - Moravia - has been "officially" founded in 1243 when the city obtained city privileges from the king Wenceslav the First. At the 14th Century walled city had about 11 thousands inhabitants and was already a residence of the Moravian land diet as well as the seat of the non-ruling prince of the Czech Kingdom. The real boom of the city, however, has been connected with the industrial development of the 19th and 20th centuries. The rapid growth of textile, food-processing and engineering industries attracted thousands of immigrants from the countryside. In 1850, the city walls were demolished, and the city as well as its suburbs continues to grow quickly. At the time of the first modern census in 1869,

105 thousands of inhabitants already lived on current city territory. The administrative fragmentation of the evolving metropolitan area came to an end in 1919, when the new Czechoslovakia created so called "the Great Brno" by the law. At the time of the first post-war census in 1921, 237 thousands of inhabitants were registered at the city territory. Similarly to the situation on Prague, local committees were established in new parts of the city to manage some of the local affairs. On the contrary to Prague, local committees in Brno were not elected but appointed by the City Assembly under the condition that the personal composition of the party representatives in local committees will be proportionally related to the results of election in the respective localities.

The relatively large administrative area of Brno was then gradually extended by the annexations of further suburban municipalities, but the scope of such extensions was relatively moderate, and more or less reacted to the natural city growth. The more important was the reform of the internal administrative structure of the city by the Law on National Committees in 1960⁴ that explicitly mentioned Brno (together with Ostrava and Pilsen)⁵ as the cities that would have the "local national committees" as the sub-city level of administration. Another law adopted in 1968 even gave the city right to decide about the creation of the city districts on its territory and delineation of their boundaries (Exner 2004). The only larger extension of the Brno territory occurred in 1971, when the Communist planners decided to merge Brno with 8 neighboring municipalities in order to prepare the city for further housing development. The new city parts however did not enjoy the special status comparable with their Prague counterparts and became subjected to already existing administration units. The last, but only a small, enlargement of the city territory happened in 1980 when a small municipality was subjected to Brno administration. Thus, administrative area of Brno reached 230 square kilometers at the end of Communist period in the 1989, giving to city with about 390 thousands of inhabitants relatively large administrative area that included areas of low population density in outer parts of the city.

2.3. Pilsen

The Pilsen got its city privileges from the king Wenceslav the Second in 1295. Being located at the confluence of the four small rivers in Western Bohemia Pilsen and the crossroad of several important trade routes connecting Bohemia, Bavaria, and Saxony, city became

⁴ Law No. 65/1960 Coll.

⁵ Prague was not mentioned as it had its status regulated by the special law.

important trade center. In 14th Century it has already been mentioned as the third largest city in Bohemia, the largest land from the historical Czech Lands. Similarly to Brno, the real boom in the city development began in the 19th century when Pilsen became the highly industrial city. The world famous Pilsner Urquell brand of beer started to be produced by the City Brewery in 1842, future giant engineering company Škoda producing almost everything from trains and wide assortment of weapons, to complete equipment of power-stations was founded in 1869. In this year, the first modern census registered relatively moderate number of inhabitants in Pilsen - 27810. The entrepreneurial success of the Škoda Company, however, led to rapid growth of the whole region. In 1917 the Škoda Company itself had 35 thousands of employees, and the city population reached 116 thousands at the time of 1921 census. As the population growth largely exceeded the city administrative area, the Czechoslovak government decided to establish the Great Pilsen in 1924 by amalgamating historical Pilsen with four neighboring municipalities. The other substantial consolidation of the city territory occurred during the Nazi occupation in 1942, when the other eight suburban municipalities were merged with the city. Since 1960, Pilsen had right to create and delineate the city districts and to establish their respective "national committees". Territory of Pilsen was notably enlarged during the wave of city consolidations that were organized by the Communist government in 70's - the last seven municipalities became part of Pilsen in 1976. Similarly to Brno and Prague, the last area consolidation provided Pilsen with larger area than necessary at time being. Thus, in 1989, when the Communist regime collapsed, Pilsen area was 137 square kilometers, number quite comfortable for the city of 173 thousands inhabitants.

2.4. Ostrava

The development of city of Ostrava has been somewhat untypical in the Czech context. In many aspects Ostrava is similar to other large Czech cities. Ostrava, precisely Moravian Ostrava, is also a very old city - it obtained city privileges as early as in 1279. Moravian Ostrava, however, did not belong to the important cities of the Czech Lands for the long period. It was overshadowed by many other cities, including several ones from the same region in terms of both population size and the political and economic status. The city, located in the North-East periphery of the Czech Lands, on the Moravian side of the boundary between historical lands Moravia and Silesia, lacked the natural "defense walls" of border mountains. Thus, the city became easy and frequent target of several grave military attacks of

hostile Eastern and Northern countries, including that of Polish Cossacks, Danes, Swedes, and Prussians. Thus, in 18th century, Moravian Ostrava represented one of the many small provincial towns with number of inhabitants barely exceeding one thousand. The fate of Moravian Ostrava and the whole region was radically changed by the discovery of high quality pit-coal in 1763, the subsequent opening of the first mine in 1787, and, namely, by the construction of the large ironworks in the small village of Vítkovice, neighboring to Moravian Ostrava in 1829. Production of iron proved to be booming business at the time, and, moreover, rapidly increased demand for more coal. Thus, both Moravian Ostrava and Silesian Ostrava (that was located on the other side of the historical land boundary) as well as several other municipalities in the region started to growth very quickly. The industrial development was further strengthened by the construction of railway connecting the Ostrava region with both Vienna and Krakow, which was accomplished in 1847.

The number of inhabitants multiplied - the first modern census in 1869 registered already 30170 inhabitants living in the territory of contemporary Ostrava, albeit is several independent municipalities. The population growth fuelled by the development of the heavy industry in the whole area continued at the high speed - in the period 1880-1910 Ostrava region was the most quickly rising metropolitan area in the whole Czech Lands, reaching the average annual increase rate of over 7 % in the decade 1890-1900. Thus, when the so called Great (Moravian) Ostrava was created by the decision of the government of the Czechoslovak Republic in 1924 merging Moravian Ostrava with six neighboring Moravian municipalities, more that 100 thousands of inhabitants used to lived on the consolidate-city territory. The long lasting administrative fragmentation of the whole metropolitan area, however, was one of the most important reasons why many cities in the area, including the Silesian Ostrava maintained their administrative independence and was not incorporated to Moravian Ostrava. The number of inhabitants living in not consolidated municipalities of the region was not negligible - it surpassed the number of Moravian Ostrava inhabitants. Paradoxically, the great step towards further consolidation of the city was done by the Nazis who ignored the historical boundaries between Moravia and Silesia and enlarged city territory substantially in 1941, merging for the first time Moravian Ostrava with its Silesian counterpart and other 11 municipalities. Thus the number of inhabitants exceeded 200 thousands. In 1946, the consolidated city adopted the name Ostrava. After the Communist coup d'état, the Ostrava region received special preferential treatment as its heavy industry specialization fitted well to the Communist government development plans. The Ostrava metropolitan area thus became

again the most rapidly growing urban area in the whole county in the period of "socialist industrialization" after 1950. The City of Ostrava itself reached 300 thousands of inhabitants in early 70's, the whole metropolitan area about twice as many.

Under the Communists, the area of the city has been enlarging continuously. In 1957, 4 municipalities were merged with Ostrava, 3 others in 1960, another one in 1966, 3 in 1975, and, finally, the last 8 in 1976. Although the city received right to establish the city district and the corresponding local national committees in 1960, it has not been used to maintain privilege status of newly merged municipalities within the city. At the end of the Communist rule, Ostrava territory was 214 square kilometers and the number of inhabitants reached 328 thousands. Yet, despite the continuing process of territorial growth of the Ostrava, important number of cities and towns in the Ostrava metropolitan area maintained its administrative independence and Ostrava usually comprised only about half of the population of the whole metropolitan area. Ostrava metropolitan area also witnessed quite rare case when relatively large city has been created as the "green field investment" - Havířov. City came into existence in 1955 when 13 thousands of people moved into newly constructed housing estates. The population grew quickly - it reached 92 thousands in 1977 on the 32 square kilometers of the city area. Since then, however, the population stagnated and later slightly declined. Although Havířov is only about 16 km East of the center of City of Ostrava, and many of Havířov inhabitants daily commute to work in Ostrava the city has never been merged with the Ostrava.

Summing up the historical experience with the governance modes in four largest Czech cities and their respective metropolitan areas one can conclude that despite differences in their population size, history and economic structure there are definitely many common features among them. For a long period of time, the government of the respective urban areas was very fragmented one. In the case of Prague and Ostrava metropolitan areas the level of administrative fragmentation was so high that even their core cities, physically and functionally unified units, were administratively divided into separate cities for much of their history. The 19th century boom of the cities fueled by their industrial development did not change much in this respect - while the compact (and high density) parts of the metropolitan areas grew very quickly, the administrative areas of the core cities did not. Consequently, the functionally defined cities outgrew their boundaries substantially, leaving the city

management heavily dependent on inter-municipal negotiation and the interventions from higher levels of administration⁶.

The collapse of Austro-Hungarian Empire and the foundation of Czechoslovakia in 1918 had important consequences for governance of the largest Czech cities. Within a few years the territories of the largest Czech cities were consolidated by the decisions of the Czechoslovak national government. Government, respecting long-term decentralization tradition and the popularity of municipal governments in the Czech Lands, however, opened space for the existence of the limited self-government of the former suburbs within the enlarged cities. Thus, the foundations of two-tier government structure in the large cities have been laid down. Legally, the only proper municipal government was at the level of the whole city, the city governments, however, could devaluate substantial of power to the sub-municipal units. This principle of partial spatial devolution of administrative competencies and the system of "multi-level⁷ governance" within largest Czech cities surprisingly survived even the Communist rule. The Communist governments, however, changed to a great extent way that the territories of the largest cities were adjusted to the city growth. While traditionally the city area consolidations (both pre-war ones and that organized under the protectorate of the Nazi Germany in 40's) were actually reactions to the growth of the cities, the planning machinery of the Communist changed the sequence of the events. Anticipating the growth, the governments decided to enlarge the territories of the city before actual development took place. Last but definitely not the least point to be mentioned in this context is the fact that the changes of administrative structures in the metropolitan areas were the imposed on them by some outer authorities. Any of the mentioned decisions, regardless whether it has been made under democratic or undemocratic regime, was neither an outcome of the agreement among the involved municipalities nor consulted directly with the citizens of the respective municipalities.

⁶ It is possible that the administrative fragmentation of the large Czech cities was preferred option of the central government of the Austrian dominated Austro-Hungarian Monarchy as it make easier to control smaller cities (dominated by Czech local politicians) from Vienna.

⁷ Basically two-level system, in case of Prague three-level system in some historical periods.

3. Governing the metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic after 1989

3.1. Government or governance?

Before we go into more detailed analysis of the system of government/governance in the Czech metropolitan areas, a short discussion about the meaning and the use of both concept in the Czech situation after 1989 seems to be necessary. After the regime change, the territorial government in Czech Republic was more in the state of flux than corresponding systems in any of the western developed country. Thirteen years (1990-2002) were needed to complete the reconstruction of the government institutions that was basically guided by principles of representative local democracy. This was a period, which was not too perceptive to the new methods of governing that were emerging elsewhere in the world with the ambition to complement or even to substitute the institutions and methods of classic representative democracy. Simply speaking: the most of the time after the 1989 was devoted debates about the *governments* and much less to debates about the *governance*. After forty years of rather sad experience with "quasi-elections" and the totalitarian regime, many of newly elected political representatives both on national and local level tended to be over-sensitive to the question of legitimacy of decision-makers. Generally, it has been claimed that legitimacy of decision-makers is derived from (and *exclusively* from) the elections. Simply speaking: whoever is elected has legitimacy to make decision in the public sphere, whoever is not elected, has no legitimacy to make any such decisions. Such idea itself is, of course, legitimate, but pushing it too far proved to be somewhat counterproductive. The idea became quickly popular among the members of political parties who started to use it for silencing any critics of the local politicians' decisions⁸ and finally evolved into a form of ideology that is quite hostile practically all forms of popular participation in the decision making process beside the elections themselves⁹.

As the proponents of such ideas held many of the important political posts, it is not surprising that both the local (municipal) and regional level governments have been organized strictly along the principles or representative democracy. Despite of that, several measures

⁸ The telling thing is that when political parties became aware their power derived from the holding the elected posts they started to manipulate the electoral laws to prevent independent local politicians from being elected - see Kostecký (2005).

⁹ Worth mentioning in this context are recent presentations in the media by Mr. V. Klaus, the Czech President, professor of economics and outspoken conservative politician, who challenged the legitimacy of the NGOs to

were incorporated in the legislation which guarantee citizens of the municipalities and regions an opportunity to participate in local and regional government also beyond the elections (see also Illner 2003b: 272-276). Thus, Law on Municipalities declares that the citizens can be members of advisory committees, may demand decisions of the Municipal Council in some selected issues, may submit proposals to local authorities that must be processed, may be present at sessions of Municipal Councils, and may inspect the municipal budgets and the annual fiscal accounts. The only potentially legally bounding act, however, is the local referendum¹⁰. A local referendum may be held to decide issues within the independent competence of municipalities. Any local citizen may propose a referendum if supported by a petition signed by a qualified number of local voters. The referendum decision, however, is valid only if more than one half of the electorate participated, which is a legal condition, which effectively discourage most of those who are potentially interested for using the local referendum, namely in large cities (Smith 2005).

Thinking about the relation between governments and governance in the Czech Republic after 1989 one has also take into account the fact that due to the orthodoxy of the Czech Communist there were no experiences in the country with the methods of *the new public management* (Clark and Hoffmann-Martinot 1998) that invaded public administration in the West. Contracting-out, public-private partnerships, privatization of communal services etc., were unimaginable before 1989 and did not much resonate in the country after 1989. And it is also one of the reasons why later, the *governance* problematique and, indeed, this concept itself, has entered the Czech public space rather late. On a wider scale, such issues as cooperation between sub-national government, non-governmental organizations and the business sector as well as creating policy networks of public and private subjects started to be discussed and implemented here only during the last five or so years.

Without the claim to be presenting the full picture we can distinguish four types of governance/network type of cooperative structures that have been applied in the Czech context. The *cooperation between the non-governmental non-profit organizations (NNOs) and the sub-national authorities* represent the first type. Legally, it is based on the above-mentioned provisions of the Law on Municipalities that open some limited space for public

participate in policy-making as representatives of public interests. Mr. Klaus emphatically rejected the view that the NGOs may represent such interests, labeling it as „*ngo-ism*“.

¹⁰ Regulated by Law No. 298/1992 Coll., about the elections to local councils and local referendum, which was replaced by Law No. 22/2004 Coll., on local referendum and the amendment of some laws.

participation in the municipal policy making, yet informal links between NNOs and the local authorities may often be more important in practice (Stachová 2005). The other type of cooperative structures is represented by *the policy partnerships and networks preparing the EU subsidized development projects*. The opportunity to apply for financial subsidies from the European funds in order to support territorial development projects that was opened to Czech subjects after the country applied for the EU membership in 1996 and has been extended after it joined the EU in 2004, stimulated territorial governments to create partnerships of subjects jointly preparing such programs. Beside the municipal and regional authorities, a variety of other actors have taken part in the networks – commercial firms, universities, cultural institutions, NNOs, the general public etc. The third emerging type is *the public-private partnership*, which has the legal foundation in the Law on Municipalities wherein municipalities and have been empowered to cooperate with physical and legal persons using provisions of the Civil Code. Finally, the last of the network type of structures can be identified in *voluntary horizontal partnerships of municipalities*. This is the form that is relatively widely used in the Czech Republic at the sub-national level (Vajdová et al. 2005). The Law on Municipalities created legal space for this cooperation by stipulating that municipalities can establish voluntary associations with other municipalities whose aim is protection and advancement of their joint interests. Development of the voluntary association of municipalities was also indirectly encouraged the by the fact that some recent development programs (both Czech and the European) mention them among the potential recipients of subsidies (Vajdová et al. 2005).

3.2. Government structures in the metropolitan areas - towards hybrid forms of metropolitan government?

The Velvet Revolution, which returned democracy back to the country, opened (as any revolution) a window of possibility for changes in the arrangement of government structures, including these at the level of metropolitan areas. However, as the new democratically elected representatives of the metropolitan core cities inherited from Communists the "excessively large" territories that comprised both compact central parts of cities and low density development areas of former suburban municipalities, the first key question in Czech metropolitan areas after 1989 was not consolidation of the core cities but their possible disintegration. It is quite surprising to learn that in the period in the post-revolutionary wave

of municipal disintegration, not a single municipality split from any of the four largest Czech cities, albeit the process of municipal splitting was truly massive. Vajdová et al. (2005) who analyzed the municipal splits counted that over 25 % of the about 4000 existing municipalities disintegrated between 1990 and 1992. Majority of new municipalities, almost 1700, were (re)established within just few months before the local elections in 1990.

To answer the question why municipalities did not split from the largest cities is not a trivial task. The explanation could partly be based on the fact that the core cities of the four largest Czech metropolitan areas endowed the special status of administrative district (Brno Pilsen, Ostrava), respective represented category of its own (the Capitol Prague). Thus, the procedure of the split from such a city would have to include the change of the district boundaries that might require the government consent¹¹. Although the procedure might be more complicated than in other cases, it was not legally impossible. Yet no real attempt to disintegrate was made, no local referendum about the possible split was organized. It is probable that other factors were at stake. Vajdová et al. (2005) noticed that most of the new communes split from the relatively small municipalities. The three-quarters of splits concerned municipalities that had less than 5000 inhabitants. 30 % of splits occurred in municipalities that had less than 1000 inhabitants (!). While such numbers to some extent reflect the general size structure of Czech municipalities, they suggest that the size of the municipality itself might represent an important factor.

Historically evolved fact that small municipalities in the Czech Republic tend to be generally poorer in terms of budget revenues per capita than the larger municipalities (Eliáš 2005) had to be taken into account. Indeed, budget revenues per capita, which are to a great extent influenced by the government transfers and subsidies, tend to show strong positive correlation with the population size of the municipality (Územní..., 2005). Due to the used system of municipal financing in the Czech Republic most new communes that came to the existence by the split from larger ones became poorer after the split. So the decision between the desire for local autonomy and the threat of the decrease of budget revenues might strongly depend on the population size of municipalities from which new communes were about to split. The larger difference between the size of the municipality from the new commune intended to split and its own population size might increase weight of economic arguments against the desire to foster the local identity. Vajdová's (2005) results of the analysis of the process of municipal splits clearly (albeit indirectly) support such hypothesis.

¹¹ Personal correspondence with Jiří Exner, former vice-mayor of the City of Prague in period 1990 and 1994.

There is, however, another factor that should be taken into account. In all four large Czech cities under observation, there was a long-term tradition of the decentralized administration within territory of the cities themselves. Therefore, after 1989, newly elected representatives appeared not only at the level of whole city but at the level of individual city parts. Also both traditional and newly established political parties tended to organize themselves on the territorial level of city districts and political representatives of these intra-city structures demanded more powers to be transferred to the hands of truly local political representations (Exner 2004). The pressure "from below" for devaluation of power within the city was difficult to resist for the city representatives who were, in reaction of the forty years of the centralist Communist regime, generally opponents of the concentration of power, although it was clear that some of the pressure originated rather from ambitions of the local power-seeking political activists¹² than the desire to build more effective structure of government. In this situation, any arguments in favor of higher level centralization of the governing structures within the cities has been attacked on the ideological grounds as not enough democratic and hardly discussed substantively.

The outcome of the discussion was thus somewhat ambiguous. At one hand, the idea that the largest cities should not split and remain *de jure* single municipalities was preserved. On the others hand the law gave the largest cities an amazingly great deal of power to decide about their internal governing and administrative structures. The Municipal Law¹³ from 1990 just assumed that the city districts within the large cities could be established. The law did not specify any particular conditions about the internal structure of the respective cities and let all decisions at the discretion of the Municipal Councils (Exner 2004). The law just required that such a city must issue a statute, which must include at the minimum: the delineation of the city district boundaries, the powers and responsibilities of the city and the city districts, and specification of the relations between the authorities of the city and authorities of the city districts¹⁴. Using their freedom to choose, the four largest Czech cities opted for different solutions.

¹² Exner (2002) mentions that one of the reasons why the decentralized administrative structure within the largest Czech cities was established might be the simple fact that it had created almost 1000 relatively well paid and very influential posts for the local political activists.

¹³ Law No. 367/1990 Coll.

¹⁴ Later versions of the Municipal Law (e.g. Law No. 410/1992 Coll.) were more specific but at the time when the law was issued, the all important governance structures within the large cities had been already established.

Prague more or less decided to respects the existing administrative city parts used under the Communist government¹⁵, just changed their status and make them all of equal in terms of their powers and responsibilities. Thus, the outcome was the creation of the 57 city districts, that all had their own directly elected "city district council", "city district mayors", and respective "city district offices", but were created extremely uneven in terms of their structure and population size. The compact central part of the city has been divided into relatively large 10 city districts (ranging between 33 000 and 130 000 inhabitants, with the average population density almost reaching 5000 inhabitants per square kilometer). The large housing estates development areas constructed under Communism constituted another 8 city districts with the population size between 5000 to 81000 inhabitants and quite high population density averaging about 3400 people per square kilometer). But majority of city districts (29) were in fact low density (about 270 people per square kilometer) suburban communes that has been amalgamated with Prague in the past. Although the territories of these city districts accounted for almost one third of the City of Prague territory, the total share of Prague citizens living in on this territory was as low as 3,5 % (individual city districts population ranging between 218 and 5000). The rest (10) of the city districts were "mixed" functionally as they combined former suburban settlements with some newer higher density housing development and, correspondingly, their population density was somewhat higher (over 600 inhabitants per square kilometer).

The other three large Czech cities were also to some extent constrained by the pre-existing administrative structures from the Communist time, yet they made more changes in their internal structures than Prague. In Brno, 5 existing city parts were divided into 19 city districts. In Ostrava, 9 existing city districts were divided into 22 new city districts. Pilsen made 8 new city districts by the separation of the 4 formerly merged suburban municipalities from the 4 existing city districts (Exner 2004). In all cases, the number of new city districts has substantially increased, in all cases the final solution was combination of several large city districts on the territory of the compact city centers, middle to high density city districts of the Communist housing estates, and low density city districts covering the former suburban communes. The main "winners" of the restructuring were without any doubt the former suburban communes. They were given the partial autonomy and they were *de jure* declared to be equal to the other city districts despite of the generally small population sizes. And the last

¹⁵ Just one extra unit has been established - Prague Troja.

but not the least, although they did not get any property from the state¹⁶, they obtained more money to their budgets by sharing their part of the whole city budgets than they would obtain provided they were separate municipalities. Despite of the freedom the large cities got to arrange their internal structures, the outcomes of the changes were quite similar at the end. In all four cities under observation two-tier structure of local government was established that combined the central power of the City Hall with the partial autonomy of the city districts, with special attention being paid to autonomy of the former suburban communes. Taking into account the large territories of the cities inherited from the Communist time, one might easily conclude that this solution resembled in fact the form of two-tier metropolitan government, where the City Hal play the role of the metropolitan government and the governments of city districts represent the local governments.

For some period of time, the above-presented solution seemed to work quite satisfactorily. Suburbanization process was relatively limited in the first half of the nineties, most of development and metropolitan related activities took place within the boundaries of the central city. This situation, however, was not ever lasting. First, the commercial development outgrew the city boundaries - the suburban areas became prime targets of the investors who built shopping malls, logistic centers, and storehouses at the cheaper land out of the cities (Sýkora 2002). Relatively soon after that, the residential development followed. Already in mid of nineties the migration statistics indicated that traditional inflow of migrants from countryside to large cities started to change - number of central city emigrants outnumbered the immigrants. Yet, most of those who moved out of the city did not return to country but moved to newly developing residential areas closely linked with cities. Although part of the this new housing development occurred within the limits of large city areas¹⁷, the important numbers of migrants moved out of the city territories (Kostelecký, Čermák 2004). Finally, the metropolitan structures outgrew the city boundaries. The government structures did not seem to follow the trend very much. It is quite understandable in the Czech context that attempts to enlarge the areas of the core cities of the metropolises were extremely rare. No such attempts have been registered in Prague, Brno, and Ostrava cases. During the period 2001-2002, the city of Pilsen negotiated with three neighboring municipalities¹⁸ about the possibility to merge. The all municipalities involved into negotiation came finally to decision

¹⁶ As the city districts they only "administer" the property of the city.

¹⁷ In Prague, for example, the population in the central part of city decreased about 8 % between 1994 and 2004, while the population of the "inner suburbs" increased about 37 % in the corresponding period.

¹⁸ Chrást u Plzně with 1677 inhabitants (at 2001 Census), Malesice (459 inhabitants), and Lhota u Dobřan (400 inhabitants).

that the amalgamation would be beneficial for all. Municipal Councils in all municipalities approved such solution, but as the proposal has been defeated in local referendum in the largest of involved suburban municipalities, only two communes merged with Pilsen at the end, becoming its 9th and 10th city districts (Exner 2004).

Apart of the above-mentioned rare case of the city consolidation, two possible governmental structures could be used under the current Czech legislation to take care about the governance in the metropolitan area: voluntary association of municipalities and regional government. The analysis of the voluntary associations of municipalities made by Vajdová et al. (2005) showed that it is generally quite difficult to collect precise and reliable information about the voluntary associations of municipalities and their activities, as the situation tend to change very quickly over time. New associations are coming to existence, some of old ones ceased to exist or eventually terminate its activity. Moreover, active associations attract new members and continuously adjust the scope of their activities to the needs. The total number of the voluntary associations was in the Czech Republic was estimated at 730 in 2004 (Vajdová et. al 2005), the number of active was probably closer to number 500. About two thirds of Czech municipalities are members at least on voluntary associations. Number of municipalities in associations vary considerably: from as low as 2 to over 100, with the modal interval between 6 and 10. As far as the purpose of the associations is concerned, the "promotion of tourism" and "regional development" is far most frequently mentioned. The analysis of the database of voluntary associations¹⁹, however, shows that they play only marginal role in the metropolitan areas. The most important fact is that core cities of the metropolitan areas are generally not involved in voluntary associations. The Prague and Pilsen are not members of a single association. The Brno is member of the only single-purpose voluntary association "Bike Path Brno-Vienna" which declares its main activity as "coordination of activities leading to establishment, advertising, administration, maintenance, and operation of the international Biking Path Brno-Vienna". The City of Brno does not coordinate the work of the association but this service is provided by one of the small municipalities that are also member. Similarly, Ostrava, has been identified as being the member of the only voluntary association: "Association of municipalities of Upper Silesia and North Moravia" that claimed that its main activity was "exchange of experiences, temporary substitution of region"²⁰. The frequency of membership in the voluntary associations is higher

¹⁹ We thank at this place to our colleague Zdenka Vajdová for her kind help and willingness to provide us with the information from the database.

²⁰ The association seems to be inactive at the moment although exists *de jure*.

in case of suburban municipalities, but only a minority of them is members of some association, so their level of activity in such establishments is generally lower than in the municipalities in non-metropolitan areas. Associations seem to be preoccupied with different topics - some with the promotion of local tourism or the preservation of local nature, others with the regional development or the maintenance of water-supply and sewage systems. None of the existing associations was established as the "suburban one", for example for the purpose of strengthening the position of the suburban municipalities via the core city of the metropolitan area or any other similar reason. Simply speaking, the voluntary associations of municipalities do not play an important organizational role in the metropolitan governing structures.

The role of the regional government in governing metropolitan areas seems to be much more relevant, albeit somewhat ambiguous. As has been already mentioned, the country has been divided in 1997 into thirteen administrative regions plus the country's capital Prague which too enjoys the status of a region. This was supplemented by the constitution of the corresponding self-governing regions in 2000. Three of the four core cities of metropolises which are discussed in this paper – Brno, Ostrava and Plzeň - are capitals of the surrounding administrative regions (the South Moravian, the Moravian-Silesian and the Plzeň region respectively). However, the territorial demarcation of these regions does not correspond with that of the respective metropolitan areas that are substantially smaller than the regions. The case of Prague is specific: the city, within its administrative boundaries, has itself the status of an administrative region, while its suburban area belongs to the Central Bohemia Region surrounding Prague in a ring-like manner and is independent of it as a political and administrative unit. Although not part of this region, Prague, paradoxically, is its capital and correspondingly, the seat of office of regional government is located in Prague.

As a consequence of the territorial incompatibility of administrative regions with the metropolitan areas and of the absence of any politico-administrative representation of the latter, any programs, plans, projects, measures etc. concerning a metropolitan area have to be negotiated among a plurality of territorial authorities, some of them mutually independent – the municipal government of the core city, governments of other municipalities within the area and the government of the respective region. In the case of the Brno, Ostrava and Plzeň metropolitan areas the coordination and, in some cases, management of such activities is provided by the respective regional authorities which are *ex lege* responsible for coordinating

the development of the region, for approval of regional development programs as well as for their implementation and supervision.²¹

In the case of the Prague metropolitan area the situation is entirely different as the two key partners – the City of Prague and the Central Bohemia region or, more precisely, their governments, are two mutually independent formations, on the par in terms of their politico-administrative status. In the absence of any higher-level coordinating authority, the governance involving both the city and its metropolitan area has to be negotiated by the two equal partners. Legal basis for such co-operation exists – it was provided by both the Law on regions (the regional system) and the Law on Capital Prague.²² The Prague as well as the Central Bohemia Region authorities have on several occasions acknowledged the importance of mutual co-operation and expressed the intention to establish cooperative structures. Thus, for example, the Strategic Plan for Prague²³ mentions that „*Prague acknowledges the special relationship with neighboring Central Bohemia Region*“, enumerates the multiple economic and other relations linking the capital with the region, stresses their importance for Prague and states that „*the extent and success of future development hinges on good working relations and communication between Prague and the Central Bohemia Region along with a coordination of goals and the ability to put in place joint investment solutions.*“ The Plan mentions that this would demand a direct improvement in joint relations and co-operation (Strategic Plan, English version, p. 25-26). Among the anticipated measures, the intention is mentioned in the Plan to set up, in agreement with the Central Bohemia Region, a joint workplace where larger investment aims in the areas falling under joint interests will be consulted and coordinated. Transport, technical, social and commercial infrastructure, housing and recreation were listed as areas of special interest (ibidem, p. 96). In its last section the Plan offered partnerships „*to all who want to share in Prague’s development*“, mentioning beside the business sector, also the surrounding municipalities of the Central Bohemia Region (ibidem, p. 107).

The reality lags behind the declarations. The intended cooperation of the Prague and Central Bohemia authorities has not sufficiently developed and the relations between the two neighbors have been ridden with tensions. The above mentioned reference in the Prague’s Strategic plan to the need to improve joint relations between the two authorities witnesses to

²¹ Law No. 129/2000 Coll., on regions (regional system).

²² Law No. 131/2000 Coll., on Capital Prague.

²³ Strategic Plan for Prague approved and adopted by the Municipal Council on 25th May 2000 defined strategic priorities of Prague for 1999-2006.

this fact. Apparently, the politico-administrative separation of Prague from its hinterland²⁴ has been repeatedly the source of problems when development of the functionally interconnected but administratively dissected metropolitan area had to be conceived and implemented.

3.3. Emerging signs of metropolitan governance? Case studies of metropolitan transportation systems in Prague and Ostrava areas.

Despite the relatively large areas of the respective core cities of the four largest Czech metropolitan areas, metropolitan development after 1989 exceeded the city boundaries, and consequently the necessity appeared to coordinate some policies between core cities and their suburban neighboring municipalities. The most clearly visible consequence of the growth of the metropolitan area has been the increase of the commuting between the suburban areas and the core cities.

The high intensity of commuting has been preserved in the last 15 years but the process was marked by the sharp rise in the use of the individual cars that increased notably in both absolute and relative terms. Despite the general trend toward car driving, the public transportation system in the core cities avoided privatization, kept its dense network of subway-, tram-, trolleybus- and bus-lines in the working conditions, and continued to be the major mean of transportation for the general public on the territory of the core cities, albeit at higher cost of transport bills for passengers. The situation in the surrounding areas, however, was quite different. The networks of the public transport were much less dense than the public transport networks within the core cities, consisting mostly of bus operated lines that were supplemented to some extent by trains. The former state-owned bus companies, which had served to majority of inter-municipal commuters, were privatized. Although the new private carriers brought better quality of services they also tended to cut the unnecessary expenditures by the discontinuing the service in times when (and at lines where) the level of utilization was below the economically acceptable level. Thus, between 1989 and mid of 1990's the number of passengers transported by public transport between municipalities (i.e. city public transport excluded) decreased to about 50 % of the former numbers despite the generally stable level of intensity commuting (Pavelčík, 2003). At the same time the number of cars increased substantially (from 241 cars per 1000 inhabitants in 1990 to 344 cars per 1000 inhabitants in

²⁴ The unfortunate split has been reproduced when the country was divided into eight NUTS 2 level Regions of Cohesion. Also within that breakdown, Prague and Central Bohemia are two separate territorial units. Moreover, Prague regional GDP per capita well exceeded the EU average, so the NUTS 2 region Prague is not eligible for

2001) and so their use as the mean of daily commuting. Not only more well-to-do residents of newly constructed suburban residential communes used the personal cars for commuting but also growing number of lower and middle class inhabitants of suburban communes began to use personal cars for daily commuting, either because they wanted of to commute more comfortably, keep abreast with new fashion, or just because they lost the possibility to use the public transport they were used to utilize.

Very quickly, however, traffic congestion became routine experience of many commuters and a search for available parking space in downtown areas of historical Czech cities became nightmare. As the majority of Czech cities were not designed for mass use of cars (at least not their central areas), and their complete redesigning was neither desirable nor possible, the only solution seemed to be the "return" to public transport. As a reaction to the rapidly deteriorating transport situation, some political representatives of central cities of the metropolises started to promote policies that would the counteract the decline of the use of the public transport. They were well aware that some car using commuters would never return to public transport but the others might to do so provided the public transport would offer to them a viable alternative. It seemed that the highest share of such potential public transport customers could be available among the people who commute to cities from suburban areas. Thus, idea to connect relatively well working city transport systems with the inter-municipal public transport by creating "regionally integrated public transportation system" came to existence. In the following text we will describe the two such systems that were established in the two largest metropolitan areas in the Czech Republic - these of Prague and of Ostrava. These two case studies will serve us examples of newly emerging modes of metropolitan governance. In the both cases, creation of such metropolitan system exceeded the boundaries of the core cities themselves and required coordination not only among different municipalities but also between public authorities and transport providers of various types.

The first clues of contemporary "Regional Prague Integrated Public Transportation System (PID)²⁵ can be traced since 1992 when two "extra-city bus lines" were created serving the commuters from the two small suburban communes Hovorčovice and Ořech. The bus lines were served by the City Traffic system of Prague and were running in parallel to the existing bus lines operated by regional bus operator. The seasonal tickets of Prague City

help from most of EU Structural Fond programs. On the contrary, the NUTS 2 region Central Bohemia GDP per capita fall below 75 % of EU average and, thus, might be target EU help under Objective 1 programs.

²⁵ Information about PID presented here came from web pages of the organization (<http://www.ropid.cz>) and from the interview with the PID official.

Transport System were usable in the inter-municipal lines. Such arrangement was considered an experimental one with the broader aim to test possibilities of the operability of metropolitan system. The initiative originated at the City of Prague, being the idea of individual City Hall representatives at the very beginning. The deal about the creation of the two experimental bus lines was made between the City of Prague, the two respective suburban communes that showed the interest in participation and the district offices of two districts adjacent to Prague (Prague-East and Prague-West) as a representatives of the state administration in the suburban territory at the time. As the idea of integrated transport system seemed to be positively accepted by the commuters, the system start to grow gradually. Already in 1992, the agreement between the City of Prague and the state-owned Czechoslovak Railways company was reached. The several train lines and the 23 train stations were included into the system, in which commuters could combine City Traffic seasonal tickets with the regular train tickets, which made the use of trains cheaper and more convenient for potential commuters.

In 1993, the organization ROPID (Regional Organizer of Prague Integrated Transport) was officially established by the decision of Prague City. The ROPID has form of so called "allowance organization" - it is fully controlled and fully financed by the City of Prague. Its statute declares its mains tasks as: preparation of further development of the regional integrated system, making proposals of its economic arrangement, making agreements with relevant partners in order to ensure the system operation, and the creation and maintenance of a unified information system. ROPID gained some important decision-making powers as it could also determine "the necessary volume of transport services", organize "the financial flow of earnings and appropriations within the Prague Integrated Transport system", and to make "selection of transporters for newly established routes in the form of public tenders". It is clear from the statute that ROPID has been primarily designed from the very beginning as the organization serving the needs of the City of Prague. The other partners in the metropolitan transport system (either suburban municipalities or private carriers) were much weaker. The only institutions, which had relatively stronger position in relation to the City of Prague at the time of the system beginning phases, were the district offices as the representatives of the state administration in the territories adjacent to Prague.

Despite of evident inequality of the involved institutions, or thanks to it, the development of the Integrated Transport system in the Prague area was quite quick. Since 1994 ROPID starts to make agreements with the first private bus operators. In 1995 the

special "outer tariff zone" was created enabling people commuting from this zone by both buses and trains to use City Traffic seasonal tickets with the special surcharge. Since 1996 the system of tariff zones was extended much further away of the city maintaining the price of the both one-way tickets and seasonal tickets in relation to the commuting distance but making the tariff scheme simple and easily understandable for customers. Since that the holders of City Traffic seasonal tickets might to use them on the railways (at no extra cost on the territory of the city, and with respective surcharges in the adjacent suburban tariff zones). At the same time the tariff rules were changed: the transfer tickets were introduced which allowed the system customers transfer from one line to another at no extra cost within the limited time period and certain number of tariff zones. Since 1998, the system of "Park and Ride" terminals were started to built at the outskirts of Prague which offered buying combined parking ticket and public transport tickets at the very competitive price.

The system proved to be viable. It has attracted growing number of suburban municipalities, multiple transport companies and, the most importantly, customers. The following table documents its growth between years 1992 and 2005.

Table 2: Basic statistic of the Regional Prague Integrated Transport System performance between 1992 and 2005

Year	No. of railway stations included in the system	No. of suburban bus lines included in the system	No. of municipalities served by the system	Performance of the whole metropolitan system (in millions. km per carriage)	Of which: Performance of suburban bus lines (in millions km per carriage)
1992	23	2	2	n.a.	n.a.
1993	26	4	4	143	n.a.
1994	43	6	7	145	n.a.
1995	59	11	15	145	0,1
1996	181	31	55	152	2,5
1997	18	38	69	150	4,1
1998	181	48	83	152	5,0
1999	181	54	10	156	6,7
2000	190	89	159	158	9,3
2001	201	114	218	162	12,9
2002	219	130	251	166	15,8
2003	221	146	286	170	17,6
2004	211	150	299	178	20,2
2005	212	147	299	162	23,6

Source: www.ropid.cz

The common interests of the City of Prague and majority of its suburbs fueled the growth of the system. For a relatively long period of time it has clearly been a win-win game. The City of Prague tried to use the system to combat its own problems with intra-city traffic

congestions, hoping that it would increase the quality of life of Prague citizens and would decrease pressure for additional budget expenditures otherwise necessary for building facilities for car using commuters (for example inner city underground parking facilities, new major intra-city roads and tunnels) that proved to be extremely costly in the context of historical city. Although Prague clearly dominated in the organization of the metropolitan transportation system, the small suburban municipalities had vital interest in joining the network. The suburban municipalities wanted to be connected with the network because it had increased their attractiveness for potential developers of both residential and commercial areas offering to future potential in- and out-commuters cheaper alternative to sole car driving, alternative usable by those who do not possess car (like some of the oldest) or car license (like the young below 18). The financial arrangement adopted by the ROPID also helped to increase the system attractiveness for small suburban communes with limited budgets. City of Prague not only had the main say in the decisions concerning the system, but also directly subsidizes substantial part of the system performance from its budget. As a rule, considerable number of scheduled bus and train connections that are considered necessary for work commuters are subsidized by the City of Prague. Only those connections that are not believed to be necessary for work commuting have to be subsidized from the budgets of suburban municipalities. Moreover, significant part of these bills is in fact covered by various employees localized in suburban municipalities who have vital interests to provide their employees and customers with the effective public transport. It is important to mention here, that state itself did neither play any active role in the creation of the metropolitan transportation system, nor provide any direct subsidies nor any for of financial incentives.

From the governance point of view it is necessary to mention the important change that occurred in the year 2000, when the new and relatively powerful player in the game appeared on the scene that made the further development of the system an open question. In the year 2000 the first elections to regional parliaments were organized. All municipalities in Prague metropolitan area beside the City of Prague itself are part of the Central Bohemian Region. The first couple of years new political representations of all the regions were preoccupied mostly by their effort to settle the operations of regional government and to establish its basic functions, and so the Central Bohemian Region representatives. But soon, the relations between the region and the City of Prague became important topic of the region's politics. Regional politicians seemed to have somewhat ambiguous relations to the City Prague. On one hand, they were well aware that the region undoubtedly benefits from its close links with

Prague, which enable region to partially share the wealth of the city and to become the location of many Prague related investments. On the other hand, new politicians and regional officials seem to be dissatisfied with the extensive power of the City of Prague in relations to the neighboring municipalities. Thus, the Central Bohemian Region, probably partly in response to historically evolved dominance of the City of Prague in the development and administration of metropolitan transportation system, started to work on plans to introduce its own regional integrated transportation system. As a consequence, the development of metropolitan network since 2004 began to stagnate. The regional government started to negotiate with Prague on behalf of municipalities. Municipalities that were not yet in connected within the metropolitan transportation system seemed to somewhat lose the initiative, being probably caught in the trap of split loyalty between regional government and the City of Prague, in which they have difficulty to decide which strategy would be the most beneficial for them to play. The cautious approach of the regional government of Central Bohemian Region as far as the further development of metropolitan transport system is evidently backed by the representatives of larger regional cities that had not wanted to join the system even before regional government has been established. In any case, the latest development is a clear example of the relevance of the institutional arrangement in which the practical decisions about metropolitan governance are made.

The second case study will be represented here by the development of the regional integrated transportation system of Ostrava (ODIS)²⁶. The Ostrava region is the only large metropolitan area in the Czech Republic that has the to some extent multi-nodal form (Kostelecký, Čermák 2005). Although the largest city in the metropolitan area - Ostrava - is much larger (316744 inhabitants in the Census 2001) than the Havířov (85855 inhabitants) or Karviná (65141 inhabitants) that rank the second and the third in the metropolis, its share of the total population of the whole metropolitan area is only about 47 %, which is quite exceptional in the Czech context. Municipalities surrounding Ostrava, however, are not typical residential suburbs but in many cases rather industrial edge cities that mushroomed in the Ostrava coal basin region since 19th century when the coal mining, and the related steel and chemical industries began to develop. The only exception is the city of Havířov that has been the outcome of the large-estate residential development of the Communist period. Of course, neither Havířov remains typical North American suburbs.

²⁶ Information presented here came from the web pages of the organization (<http://www.kodis.cz>) and the interview with its manager.

Despite the close mutual links among the municipalities in the area and large numbers of daily commuters, the regional transportation system came into existence much later than that of Prague. ODIS has been officially established at the end of year 1996 as the outcome of the initiative of the several local politicians from Ostrava and the neighboring small town Hlučín (14346 inhabitants). At the end of the year 1997, the system was already linked Ostrava with 23 suburban municipalities, albeit neither of them was large municipality, the year after the number of linked municipalities increased to 27. The further development of the metropolitan network is documented in the following table.

Table 3: Basic statistic of the Integrated Transport System of Ostrava performance between 1999 and 2004

Year	No. of railway stations included in the system	No. of bus lines included in the system	No. of municipalities served by the system	Performance of the whole metropolitan system (in millions. km per carriage)	Of which: Performance of suburban lines (in millions km per carriage)
1999	10	59	39	39,1	2,8
2000	12	59	43	35,0	2,7
2001	41	66	59	35,1	2,8
2002	42	69	66	38,6	2,9
2003	42	108	88	42,6	6,7
2004	n.a.	128	105	44,0	8,0

Source: www.kodis.cz

As is visible from the table, the growth of the metropolitan integrated transport system of in Ostrava region was less dynamic that that of Prague metropolitan area. Although the number of bus lines and the number of municipalities served by the system increased considerably, performance of the system (measured in millions km per carriage) did not grow too much in the observed period. So did the performance of specifically suburban lines that more or less stagnated or even slightly declined between 1999 and 2001. The numbers, however, suggest that after 2001 and namely after 2002, performance of the system started to grow notably. It should be linked with the composition of the network. In 2001, finally, the two from larger cities (Opava with 61382 inhabitants, and Frýdek-Místek with 61400 inhabitants) joined the system that undoubtedly provided impulse for further development of the network. Thus, in 2005 metropolitan transportation system served to an area exceeding 1000 square km in which lived more than 600000 inhabitants. As far as the mode of operation is concerned, the metropolitan transportation system in Ostrava area strongly resembles that of Prague. It combines the municipal transportation systems of the large cities with the inter-municipal transportation system, included buses, tramways, trolley-buses and trains, used was

based on the idea of unified tariffs and tariff zones. It use single institution (KODIS) coordinating the development and operation of the system, actual transport facilities are provided by numerous transport companies, both public and private.

Attentive reader might notice, however, that names of the largest satellite edge cities - Havířov and Karviná - were not mentioned in the previous paragraphs. Indeed, the building of the transportation system in the Ostrava metropolitan area was far from being easy. Both Havířov and Karviná (as well as other 11 smaller municipalities located in the eastern part of the metropolitan area, in a short distance from the core city) did not join the system. Representatives of mentioned cities did not want to subject their own city transport systems to the metropolitan one and were not willing to gave their privilege to set up the tariff system in their own city transport to any collective authority. The interview with the regional integrated transportation system of Ostrava manager confirmed that the firmness of the position of the Havířov and Karviná representatives might be beneficial for them at the end. The new system of tariffs is under the preparation that would enable independent tariff decisions over the municipal transport in individual cities connected to metropolitan network provided the system remains otherwise compatible with the metropolitan one. So, it is probable that the system would be enlarged substantially in the near future.

The legally, the management of the metropolitan transportation system in Ostrava region is based on completely different principles than that of Prague metropolitan area. The organizer of the metropolitan transport system is the company KODIS Ltd. that has been established under the Business Code by the several municipalities in 1997. The different municipalities own different share of the company and, thus, exercise, different portion of the power. As in other limited companies those who own simple majority of shares make the decision. Not all municipalities connected by the network own the shares, but larger ones do. As the metropolitan transportation network gradually grew, the structure of shares, and consequently the power adjusted to the changing situation several time. The Table 4 provides readers with the specific information about the power structure of the company.

Although the City of Ostrava became the strongest shareholder from the very beginning, it has never dominated the KODIS. Between 1996 and 2003, representatives of at least two or three other municipalities had to join Ostrava to make a majority coalition in the board. Institutional structure of the company, however, changed quite substantially in 2003, when new relevant institution entered company. Similarly as in the case of Prague, it has been the Regional Government of Moravian-Silesian Region which become involved.

Table 4: Changes of Power Structure in the Coordinator of Regional Integrated Transportation System of Ostrava (KODIS Ltd.)

Year of change	No. of shareholders	Minimal No. of institutions necessary for forming "majority coalition"	The most relevant shareholders	Their share in the company (in %)
1996	9	3	Ostrava city	36,7
			Hlučín city	10,0
1999	11	4	Ostrava city	33,2
			Hlučín city	8,8
2001	12	4	Ostrava city	31,3
			Hlučín city	8,3
2002	13	4	Ostrava city	27,4
			Opava city	12,5
			Hlučín city	7,2
2003	14	2	Ostrava city	31,2
			Government of Moravian-Silesian Region	31,2
			Opava city	6,5
2004	15	2	Ostrava city	29,9
			Government of Moravian-Silesian Region	29,9
			Opava city	6,2

Source: Business Register of the Ministry of Justice (available at www.justice.cz)

The activity of the regional government, however, did not represent a barrier against further development of the metropolitan transportation network. Quite on the contrary: it has been an important impulse for further improvement of the network. As City of Ostrava as well as all the other municipalities in the metropolitan area belong to the same region, the regional government provide platform for negotiation and the balancing the diverging interest of individual cities. Also, political representation of Moravian-Silesian Region, in which the politicians from Ostrava are the part of but are not in a dominant position, is considered as the right partner of the City of Ostrava itself representing the broader interests of the region. The regional government also could use its powers in regional planning to facilitate the development of the network. The regional government also subsidizes the scheduled network connections that are considered necessary for the work commuters (defined as the week-day connections and two connections per day during weekend), while the other connections are subsidized from the budgets of municipalities. City of Ostrava that is the usual target of majority of lines pays 30 % of the subsidy the rest is covered by other respective municipalities. In the period preceding the existence of regional government, small contributions were obtained from district offices. In sum, the institutional arrangement again proved to play important role in observed form of the metropolitan governance. On the contrary to the Prague case, the metropolitan transportation in Ostrava region seems to growth under the guidance and with coordination role of the regional government.

4) Conclusions

The analysis of the current structures of metropolitan government and the modes of governance in the Czech Republic provided us with answers of most of the questions that were asked in the introduction. How the Czech metropolises are governed? It is hardly possible to answer this question with a simple answer but it is clear that there are some typical features of the current metropolitan governance in the Czech Republic. It is true, however, that despite the different histories, sizes and economic structures of the four largest Czech metropolitan areas under observation, it is clear that ways in which they are administered are rather similar. In all cases the relatively large areas of the core cities of the metropolises, well exceeding the territories of the proper compact centers of the cities, lead to the situation in which substantial part of the metropolitan development in fact occur within the administrative areas of the core cities, and, therefore, could be governed by the respective city authorities. In all cases, the similar structure of the city government was adopted - two-tier city government - that divide the power in between the City Hall that is concerned about strategic issues and the city district governments that take care about many agendas of the daily life. This solution enables to preserve the identity of former suburban municipalities that were forcibly merged with the cities in the past.

The metropolitan development that exceeds the large territories of the respective core cities is in all cases coordinated much poorly and much less formally. There are no formal institutions of the proper metropolitan government in the Czech Republic. Regional governments seem to have potential to play the relatively important role in this context, but their role is somewhat ambiguous. While in case of Brno, Pilsen and Ostrava metropolitan regions the regional governments may play role of coordinator in the governance of the respective metropolitan areas, in the unfortunate case of Prague metropolitan area, where the core city and suburbs belong to two different regions, the existence of regions might make metropolitan coordination even more complicated. Other institutions, potentially usable in metropolitan governance purposes, like voluntary organization of municipalities does seem to be important so far. Thus the dominant mode of inter-municipal coordination within the metropolitan areas so far seems to be the direct negotiation between the core-city and the suburban municipalities. The strength of the negotiating partners is a relevant fact. In cases, when the core city is clearly dominating the relations (all cases but Ostrava) the cooperation and coordination of policies seems to be possible, albeit not based on equality of the involved partners. Problem arises when the suburban partners of the core city are relatively strong. In

such cases the "usual method" of the pressure of the stronger partner to weaker ones is not possible to use, and the coordination of policies by the negotiation of the relatively equal partners is not easy to achieve. As the continuing suburbanization will strengthen the suburban municipalities face to face the core cities, the situation could become more complicated in the future.

Owing to historical experience of the Czech Republic with the Communist regime, the debate how to govern metropolitan areas tend to be much more about the governments than about the governance. The involvement of other potential policy actors in the metropolitan governance is not too extensive. In brief: other policy actors apart of the elected governments are mostly not considered legitimate enough to participate in the governance processes. History generally plays important role in the current metropolitan structures that seem to be surprisingly path-dependent. So far, the way in which the Czech metropolitan areas are governed is more influenced by the past development than the most recent one. However, the changes that Czech metropolitan areas underwent after 1989 and even larger changes that can be anticipated in the future will surely bring back the governance debate as the relevant issue in the years to come.

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