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Metropolitan Governance Reform In Germany

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Introduction

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

Today, there is an ongoing dispute about the structural intensity in regional cooperation forms. Wagner (1982) differentiated between weak and strong association forms on the basis of the institutional sovereignty regarding their competences, resources and legitimization. Regional associations with weak structures have very few competences, tasks and resources and are legitimated by the members of cooperating cities or counties. Regional associations with strong structures have rather large competences, tasks and resources and are directly legitimated by the citizenry. In an updated article, Kübler (2003) gave an overview of metropolitan research and cited three different approaches of metropolitan governance: metropolitan reform with the intention of strong associations, public choice with the intention of weak associations and new regionalism as a new cooperation form. The first part of this paper will therefore address the question to what extent the growing functional interdependencies between cities and their suburbs induce new, possibly more institutionalized, forms of metropolitan governance. As ongoing suburbanisation is reconfiguring the urban space, how fruitful are the theoretical approaches cited above to describe and analyse the process of metropolitan governance reform in Germany?

To answer the question which government strategies and institutional designs are being developed to cope with metropolitan challenges, we will shortly present the principal characteristics of the nine biggest metropolitan areas in West and East Germany. One assumption is that various political-administrative conditions, industrial landscapes and regional traditions require different governance solutions (Fürst 1997; Salet et al. 2003).

The success of metropolitan reform will also largely depend on the public support metro-governance is able to gain. In this regard, the second part of this paper will give a detailed examination of the reform development and implementation process in the metropolitan area of Stuttgart, the capital of Baden-Wuerttemberg. The experiences of the last decade can answer questions about implementation speed, reform acceptance and the resulting political and organizational fallout. Finally, we try to outline an agenda for future stages in the research on metropolitan governance in Germany.

1. Metropolitan areas in West and Eastern Germany

Inventing the most suitable institutional form of metropolitan government has been of great concern to urban practitioners as well as to social scientists. In the context of increasing regional and global competition, brought about by the globalization and the European Integration, the last decade has witnessed a lot of attempts to renew metropolitan governance. Against this background, our analysis of metropolitan governance reform in Germany will unfold in three steps. After outlining the challenges posed to metropolitan governance by the ongoing process of suburbanisation, this paper firstly addresses the spatial and regional planning process as it broadens our understanding of the political and administrative contexts metropolitan governance reform takes place in. Secondly, the main characteristics of Germany's principal metropolitan areas are to be presented with a special view to Kübler's typology mentioned above. Lastly, the contention that structural pre-conditions lead to different types of metro-governance will be examined.

The selection of the largest metropolitan areas is based on the current migration changes¹ in Germany. Figure 1 indicates that the suburbanization process in Germany is still going on. Indeed, the difference between citizens moving into and leaving certain geographical areas in the year of 2000 translates a major demographic change:² High positive influx changes are marked blue, negative migration red, moderate gains up to 1000 persons are green, moderate losses yellow. The map shows very impressively the pull of seven metropolitan areas in West Germany: The cities of Hamburg, Berlin, Hanover, Dortmund/Essen, Frankfurt (Main), Stuttgart and Munich are deep blue; the areas surrounding them light blue. There seems to be a correlation between the size of the core city and the sprawl power into the region. So Hamburg and Berlin have wider rings of influx than for example Hanover.

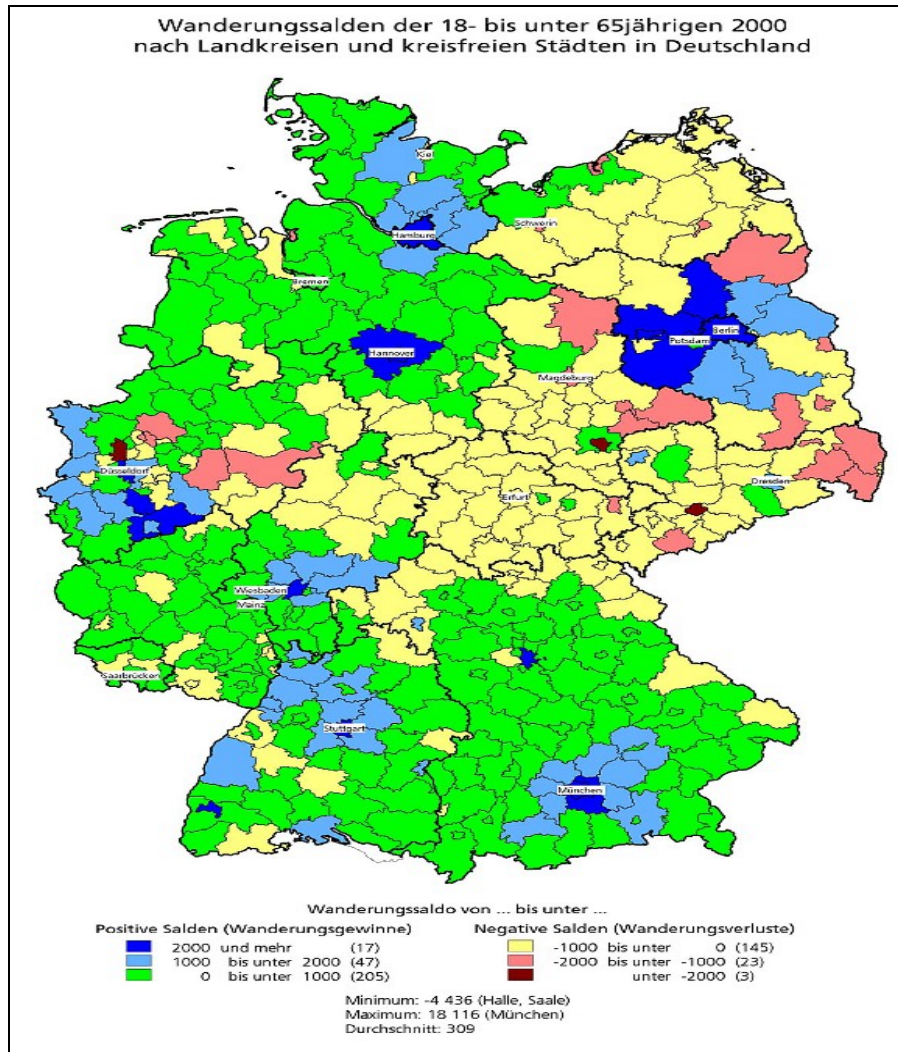
In East Germany, only Dresden and Leipzig tend to evolve into metropolitan areas. The situation in Eastern Germany is strongly distinct from the western part

¹ For alternative definitions of metropolitan areas please refer to Walter-Rogg (2005)

² Information about migration balance is related to persons between the age of 18 and 65 because they constitute the working strata of society

of the country. After the German unification, a process of urban regeneration and modernization has been initiated but not finished yet. Functioning settlement structures and infrastructures are important prerequisites for national and international competition. The two mentioned regions launched several cooperation forms to achieve an internationally comparable standard. That is the reason why they are included in this analysis.

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



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

Similar to evolutions seen in North America or other European countries, ongoing suburbanisation is continuously reshaping the urban and rural space in Germany, the pattern of metropolization being quite similar to the U.S. trends, at least as regards the old Laender (Walter-Rogg 2005: 94-118). The expansion of the agglomeration areas into their surrounding areas in the last decades evokes serious problems in Germany. The growth in settlement area and traffic leads to congestion in urban agglomerations and threatens their viability and attractiveness. Increasing land claims and impairments through housing, industry, commerce and traffic endanger the quality of natural resources. Furthermore, the German met-

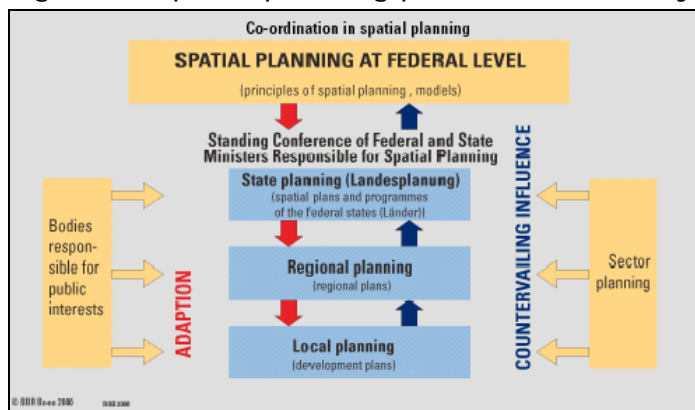
ropolitan areas have been undergoing structural transformation processes for approximately three decades. The growth rates are not high enough to compensate the effects of economic rationalization and to stabilize the employment level. The appearance of attractive settlements outside the core city threatens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

In Germany, issues related to regional cooperation and its adequate forms have mainly been discussed by researchers of public administration, less by political scientists. Indeed, it is indispensable to consider the political-administrative contexts of metropolitan cooperation. On the one hand, they largely determine the possible solutions to challenges posed by metropolitan governance. On the other hand, different administrative and cultural traditions require different forms of regional cooperation. In countries like the US or Switzerland, weak forms of cooperation are more likely because these countries emphasize individual autonomy and modes of self-administration whereas in other countries such as France, Great Britain or Sweden strong forms of metropolitan associations might emerge because the influence of the state level on the local one is very high (Fürst 1997). In the same regard, a closer look at the spatial and regional planning process in Germany will broaden our understanding of metropolitan governance reform.

1.1. Spatial and regional planning in Germany

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

Figure 2: Spatial planning process in Germany



Source: Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning 2001

Spatial planning is therefore shaped by diverse integration and coordination processes between the spatial planning levels of the federal government, the Laender, the regions and the municipalities. In the context of the amended 1998 Federal Regional Planning Act, numerous new focuses of activities and instruments which strengthen regional competitiveness and sustainable regional development have been introduced. These range from innovative approaches to intra-regional cooperation, regional land management, integrated transportation and trade conceptions, the application of new information technologies and the regional protection of open spaces to new forms of cultural activities in the regions.

During the 1990s, the majority of the federal Laender agreed on new spatial planning programs for their respective territories. Their statements are supplemented and put into concrete terms by regional plans which usually cover the territories of several counties. In the old federal Laender, there are legally binding plans for almost all regions. **New informal and voluntary instruments** complement the frequently rigid regional plans, which, in many cases, hinder a fast and flexible reaction to changing conditions. Examples of these instruments are regional development concepts, in which special interest groups and public authorities agree on goals and concrete actions, or contractual agreements between municipalities and private companies, which determine the contents and

measures of spatial plans, or urban networks, in which cities cooperate in certain sectors (Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning 2001).

1.2. Main characteristics of the German metropolitan areas

In this chapter, the main characteristics of the above identified nine metropolitan areas in Germany will be analysed in relation to our initial question. Which form of regional cooperation was chosen, what are the main tasks and what kind of legitimization is given? Are there similar or different patterns observable and is it possible to identify a special trend of cooperation in these metropolitan areas? And, furthermore, is there support for the assumption that every single region needs a special cooperation solution (Wahl 1998)?

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

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

During the 1960s and the early 1970s, large-scale urban agglomerations such as Hanover (Urban Association Greater Hanover, 1962), Stuttgart (Association Region middle Neckar, 1973) or Munich (Association of regional planning Munich, 1973) consolidated metropolitan institutions which focussed on the issues of administrative efficiency, local service provision, regional planning and spatial re-

distribution. By the early 1980s however, these technocratic projects of metropolitan governance had been widely discredited and were increasingly under attack. Local governments subsequently began to mobilize new strategies of endogenous economic development in order to cope with place-specific socio-economic problems, to adjust to newly imposed fiscal constraints and to attract new sources of external capital investment (Eisenschitz/Gough 1993).

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

The three areas of Berlin/Brandenburg, Halle/Leipzig and Dresden also appeared in the 1990s. The regions of Berlin, Brandenburg and Dresden are participating in the EU-RITTS program. RITTS means Regional Innovation and Technology Transfer Strategies. It is a program by the European Commission aimed at fostering structural development and the effectiveness of the innovation and technology transfer in the regions of Europe. The secular objective will be to optimize the regional technology transfer and to improve the economic situation of business actors. Until now, RITTS projects have been implemented in 70 regions of Europe. Due to its historical tradition, Berlin has been a special area with manifold problems since World War II. In contrast to other big cities, Berlin was not able to cooperate with the areas surrounding the city for many decades. Only through the German unification cooperation with Brandenburg became possible. Since the unification, Berlin has faced considerable economic difficulties, including a continuous decline in the number of companies and the number of jobs available. Special Berlin subsidies for investors from West Germany, which were awarded before the reunification, no longer exist, which resulted in a large number of companies leaving the city in the 1990s. The economic integration of Berlin and the surrounding region of Brandenburg has not yet proven satisfactory (Benz/König 1995). For the purpose of regional political integration, Berlin and Brandenburg constituted a provisional board of regions (1990), in 1995 they decided to cooperate in planning and space structure politics. The infrastructure has a strong potential, but the different elements do not work together as a system. Moreover, Berlin does not have a single innovation strategy. The number of companies located in Berlin, the number of jobs available and the trend of the regional economy show that the economy of Berlin is in decline – a decline which

is not necessarily reversed by relocation of the federal German capital from Bonn to Berlin. In launching a RITTS project, the "Technologiestiftung Innovationszentrum Berlin" (TSB) intended to mitigate this decline by developing an innovation strategy for Berlin. A key principle in the project was to work in tight cooperation with all actors in the city involved in innovation and technology policy as well as with representatives of the region's scientific and industrial world.

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

1.3. One size does not fit all - Conditions and formal structure of metropolitan cooperation

Table 1 gives some comparative information regarding the metropolitan areas. The structural data indicate that the regions have to solve very similar tasks under very different conditions. The density per square kilometre is highest in the Ruhr district, where 5.5 million inhabitants live in 53 municipalities within an area of 4.434 square kilometres. In the "Metropolregion Hamburg" 4 million people live in 500 municipalities within an area of 19.000 square kilometres, with the result that population density is very low. The very densely populated areas of the Ruhr District, Berlin/Brandenburg and Stuttgart are obviously confronted with other problems than the less densely populated areas of Frankfurt, Hanover or Munich or the hardly densely populated areas of Dresden, Hamburg or Halle/Leipzig. Three of the nine metropolitan areas have cooperation structures crossing the borderline of one federal state. The "Metropolregion Hamburg" includes the federal state of Hamburg and six counties in Schleswig-Holstein as well as eight counties in Lower Saxony. In the region of Halle/Leipzig, the two federal states Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt work together like the federal state of Berlin does with Brandenburg (Breuste/Kabisch 1996; Benz/König 1995). Because of these state boundaries, cooperation at an autonomous regional level and the incorporation of an institutionalized association is hardly possible. Multiple tasks and problems were also caused by the polycentric structure of some metropolitan areas like Dortmund/Essen (Rhine-Ruhr), Stuttgart and Frankfurt (Benz et al. 1998; Faust 1998; Frohner 1998; Hötker 1998). If the counties around a core city offer similar or better living and working conditions, then a suburbanization process is more likely to occur than in a monocentric area. On the other hand, the growing middle-sized municipalities around a core city will, in the long run, face the same problems as the centre (figure 3).

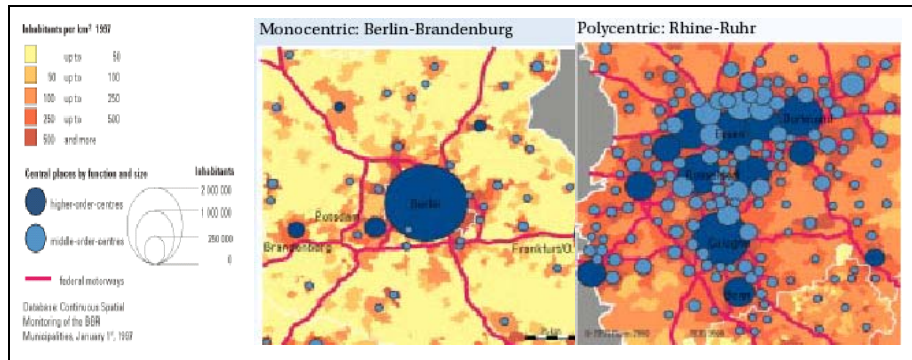
Table 1: Characteristics of nine metropolitan areas in Germany 2004 (ranking by cooperation tradition)

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

¹RITTS is a program of the European Union to support "Regional Innovation and Technology Transfer Strategies".

² All budget numbers see Benz et al. 1998.

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



Source: Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning 2001

These different structural pre-conditions lead to the conclusion that the nine metropolitan areas need tailored solutions for regional cooperation. Referring to existing theoretical models, three concepts play a major role as regards metropolitan governance reform. Researchers in the “metropolitan-reform tradition” promote strong institutionalization to avoid the political and economic disadvantages of fragmented areas. Empirical examples of these consolidations are incorporations of municipalities which occurred at the beginning and in the middle of the 20th century. Otherwise, the problems can be tackled by the creation of a new political organisation at the regional level, which features extensive competences and a strong legitimization, possibly by the citizenry (Kübler 2003: 536). In contrast to this, researchers in the “public choice tradition” emphasise the advantages of fragmentation in metropolitan areas and defeat the consolidation of metropolitan areas. They favour a cooperation model based on “Functional Overlapping Competing Jurisdictions (FOCJ)” (Frey/Eichenberger 2001). That notion refers to purpose-oriented networks of voluntary inter-regional cooperation, which are not territorially separated, showing extensive democratic rights of participation as well as their own sources of legitimization and taxes.

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

Taking into account these reform approaches and the **main** cooperation structure in each metropolitan area, we observe several cooperation models in practice. Table 2 displays that the range goes from loose purpose-oriented networks (Dresden) and state-run regional planning (Berlin/Brandenburg, Munich) over

state-run local mixtures (Hamburg, Halle/Leipzig) to relatively strong institutionalized associations at the regional level (Frankfurt, Dortmund/Essen, Stuttgart, Hanover). Neither the strongest possible institutional reform – namely the creation of a single regional municipality (Regionalstadt) leading to the abandon of existing local authorities and counties– nor regional districts (Regionalkreise) where the counties would have to be abandoned while the existing municipalities would resist and the core cities would loose their county free status, have not been realized yet. Therefore, we shall keep in mind that stronger reforms could be possible, but actually do not find support in Germany.

Table 2: Models of metropolitan governance in Germany

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

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

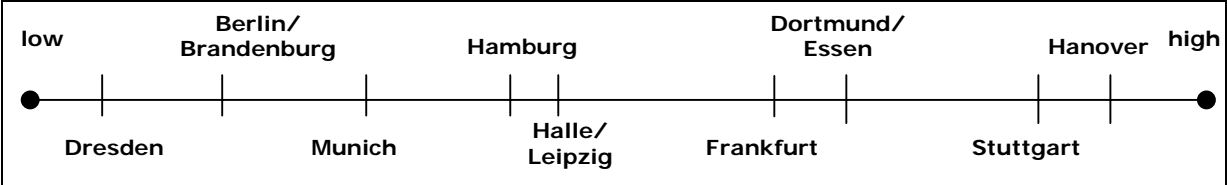
The advantage of a strongly institutionalized regional associations lies in their accountability. Thus, conflicts between different administrative levels and associations can be minimized. Furthermore, administrative processes are simplified and lean management becomes possible, which, all in all, implies more efficiency. Studies in the United States indicated that agglomerations with strong institutionalization between the cooperating municipalities have had the greatest economic efficiency because “the sum of efforts within a metropolitan region yields a unique synergy, which its local parts cannot achieve separately” (Savitch et al. 1993: 342). However, the implementation of that reform model is only achievable under particular conditions. In Hanover, it was much easier to create a highly institutionalized regional association than in Stuttgart since only one core city and one county were involved (Heinz et al. 2004: 20). Clear and consistent reform politics by the federal state government form another prerequisite for this reform type to be crowned with success. But Heinz reminds us that in most cases, the federal politicians rather fear the competition of a new level of government (Heinz 2000). Additionally, metropolitan regions comprising areas in different federal states like Hamburg, Berlin/Brandenburg or Halle/Leipzig cannot be structured by a single regional authority. In Stuttgart, this solution was dis-

cussed as well but not realized in the end. Nevertheless, the regional parliament of Stuttgart is very autonomous and provided with a lot of competences, tasks and resources.

In Berlin and Dresden, the European RITTS-projects followed a city network approach to bring together different regional actors. Many publications in social and economic science suggest that, in the world of globalization, decentralised networks are a crucial tool for increasing the rate of innovation and enhancing progress on new technologies.

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

Figure 4: Degree of institutionalization at the metropolitan level



Referring to the three approaches mentioned by Kübler (2003), we can further conclude that all of them have made their way into the biggest metropolitan areas of Germany. Currently, the new regionalism takes wide space in the theoretical discussion in the United States (Downs 1994, Rusk 1995, Savitch/Vogel 2000) as well as in Europe (Van den Berg et al. 1993, Le Galès 1995, Benz 2001). What makes this approach so attractive is the idea that is vain **to give advice** for the best and unique form of regional cooperation. Instead, researchers recognize that each metropolitan area needs its special solution. The comparison of the cooperation forms in Germany confirms the impression that the cooperation structure depends on the particular spatial conditions and problems in a single region. These conditions determine the competences and tasks of the association and the conflicts it has to handle.

At the same time, the possibilities of cooperation are not unlimited (Benz 2003). Heinz et al. (2004) mentioned nine models of metropolitan cooperation discussed in Germany, which differ in size, involved actors, competences, tasks, resources, legitimation and consequences for existing political-administrative structure. Regarding the analyzed areas, five models are actually found in reality: city networks, regional conferences, special-purpose local planning associations, multiple-purpose regional planning associations and strong institutionalized associations. Neighbourhood associations exist as well, but not as the most important cooperation model in the nine urban agglomerations (table 3). The three models

“communautés urbaines”, “regional district” or “regional municipality” have often been discussed, but not yet realized.

Table 3: Discussed reform models in Germany

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

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

An important task for the future will therefore be to specify the relevant conditions for certain cooperation forms. Within the new regionalism school, the appropriate **definition of frameworks** for regional cooperation through the higher political-administrative levels is seen as one important factor for the success of regional cooperation. The RITTS program in Dresden and Berlin/Brandenburg are good examples of top-down regional cooperation initiatives. **Strong leadership**, capable of developing regional visions, is believed to be the second condition. Leadership may be assumed by a single entrepreneur with sufficient financial resources or a charismatic, influential mayor who can convince other actors to participate in the project of regional development. In the metropolitan areas of Lyon and Bordeaux, regional governance was achieved by strong leadership of local elites (Jouve/Lefèvre 1999). But even these elites are not able to handle all tasks by themselves. Many responsibilities remain under the control of other public authorities or private business firms, making cooperation and negotiation indispensable. Detractors of the new regionalism approach draw our attention to of the lack of legitimacy it is allegedly burdened with. Whereas political legitimization respectively participation is still connected to territorially defined political jurisdictions (Heinz 2000; Benz 2001), loosely coupled networks of entrepreneurship are not legitimated by the citizenry because they do not necessarily form public bodies.

The reform efforts in the Stuttgart area could indicate how to overcome this dilemma. The following passages will demonstrate that the Association Region

Stuttgart effectively combines the demands of all three approaches. In fact, the region is quite strongly institutionalized (metropolitan reform) as shown by the Association and the presence of a directly elected Regional Assembly. Nevertheless, some regional tasks are still performed according to a scheme of functional overlapping of competing jurisdictions (public choice) and informal networks focussed on regional development can be found as well (new regionalism).

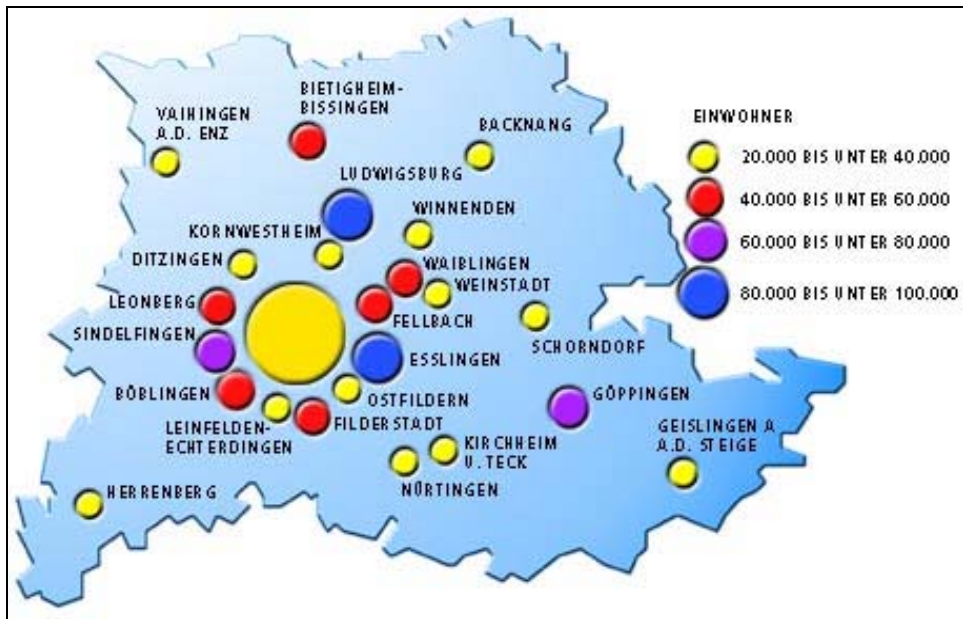
Given the very complexity of the issue at hand, the first part of this contribution can only be a starting point for the further analysis of metropolitan governance in Germany. Deeper research is necessary to understand the work of metropolitan governance structures in reality and to answer questions about implementation speed, acceptance of the reform and the political and organizational fallout resulting from governance renewal.

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

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

Already at the beginning of the 1970s, the negative consequences of suburbanization were observable in the urban agglomeration of Stuttgart. Contrary to other middle size conurbations, the core city is surrounded by a ring of prospering cities. Because of this polycentric structure, city-suburb conflicts known from other metropolitan areas become very pronounced and the complexity between the core city and the suburbs is very intensive, posing a great challenge to regional governance. A glance at inhabitant figures in the region of Stuttgart demonstrates its polycentric structure (figure 5). Whereas Stuttgart's population is currently 590.112, the ring of strong, middle-sized cities surrounding the capital of Baden-Wuerttemberg has approximately the same number of inhabitants.

Figure 5: Inhabitants in the region of Stuttgart



Source: www.region-stuttgart.org

The reform politics of regional cooperation has a relatively long tradition in the federal state of Baden-Wuerttemberg, especially in the region of Stuttgart (Heinz et al. 2004). At the beginning of the 1970s, the core city lost population and business firms to the suburbs and with it the basis of tax revenues (Walter-Rogg 2004). Important tasks like the development of a regional infrastructure could not be realized because of conflicts about the share of costs between the municipalities. That is the reason why first a regional planning community and, in 1972, the Association "Mittlerer Neckar" were founded. However, these associations were not able to solve the problems since it was not the development of Greater Stuttgart, but the particular interests of local authorities that dominated the discussions. When decisions were taken, single non-cooperative municipalities delayed or inhibited the implementation process.

The situation worsened at the beginning of the 1990s when the region faced an employment collapse and a strong interregional competition brought about by the European integration (Iwer/Dispan 1999). Actors of the federal state, the greater region, business firms, the media and especially the core city of Stuttgart called for the constitution of a strong regional cooperation structure with extensive competences. After the federal state election in 1992, the new government (coalition of Christian and Social Democrats) initiated intensive regional reform politics and adopted laws for "the strengthening of cooperation in the Region of Stuttgart" and for "the constitution of the Association Region Stuttgart". As a consequence of this federal state reform politics, the Verband (= "Association") Region Stuttgart was founded in 1994 and gave the region a political organisation with its own directly elected representatives: the **Regional Assembly**. This

democratically legitimated decision-making body covers the central planning policies - regional, infrastructure, landscape, traffic and transport - as well as business promotion, local public transport, waste management and tourist marketing. With a 2/3-majority the Association can take on voluntary tasks such as the sponsorship and coordination of culture and sports events, trade fairs and exhibitions with regional importance. The Stuttgart Region includes the state capital of Stuttgart and the surrounding districts of Böblingen, Esslingen, Göppingen, Ludwigsburg and Rems-Murr - altogether 179 towns and communities. The central aim of the association is to marshal the forces of the independent municipalities within the Stuttgart conglomeration in order to enable the region to compete effectively at the European and the world level.

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

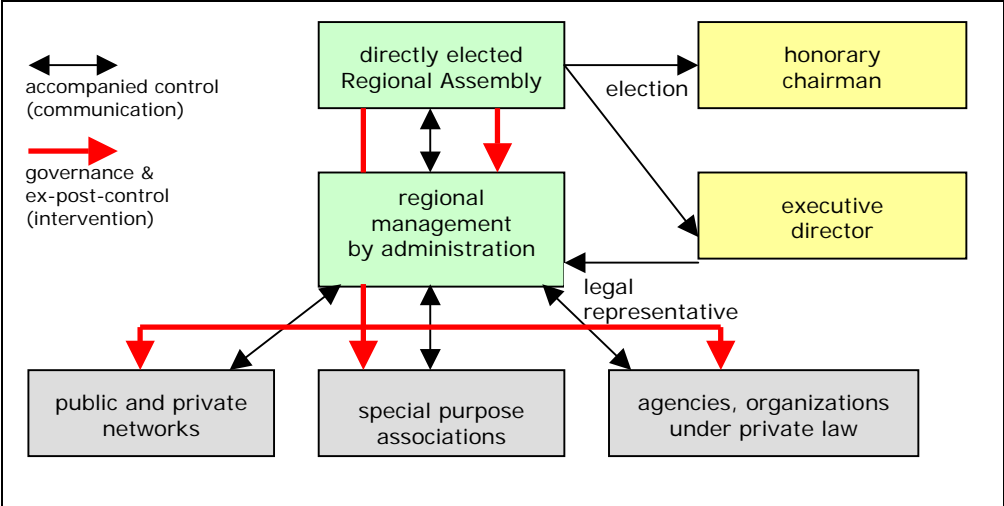
The following chapters contain a description and discussion of the political and organizational fallout of the regional reform politics in the last decade for the special case of Greater Stuttgart and try to give an answer to the question which conditions need to be met for successful regional governance.

2.1. Governance and control structure of the reform model

Formally the "Verband Region Stuttgart" is a public body ("Körperschaft des Öffentlichen Rechts") with restricted regional tasks (Steinacher 2002). In contrast to the districts and municipalities of Baden-Wuerttemberg, the Association has two heads: the honorary Chairman of the assembly is elected by the Regional Assembly and presides over its sessions. The Executive Director is the legal representative of the Verband and carries out the decisions of the Regional Assembly. He is elected as a civil servant for a period of eight years by the regional councillors. The institutional framework in which these two persons lead regional cooperation consists of three elements: the competence to device regional planning, the combination of responsibility for regional planning and other important regional tasks, and the constitution of a directly legitimated regional parliament. Hence, regional cooperation is embedded in a hierarchical structured core institution (Benz 2003: 506; Steinacher 2002).

For experts, it is the combination of several structural elements which characterizes the regional governance in the region of Stuttgart: the interaction of hierarchy and cooperation, a lean management³ as well as regional networks under the control of the Regional Assembly, in which democratically legitimated majority decisions are possible. In fact, the Association displays an interesting mixture of majority democracy, hierarchical management structure, functional differentiated networks – respectively special organisations – and cooperative conflict management (Benz 2003: 511, see figure 6).

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



Source: Benz (2003: 511)

The institutional setting encompasses a combination of ex-post-control by the Regional Assembly and flanking control, based on communication and coordination by the regional management. The executive director and his management are in turn subordinate to the political control by the Regional Assembly. One very important problem of metropolitan governance – the “Negotiator’s Dilemma” (Lax/Sebenius 1986:39) - can be tackled with this kind of institutional structure. In most cases, involved communities have to be responsive to their own local councils and citizenry. Consequently, they will act very carefully when it comes to supra-local policies and, in the worst case, even refuse regional cooperation. According to Benz (2003: 507), this situation can be avoided in Stuttgart because the regional cooperation occurs in “the shadow of hierarchy”. If the negotiation process fails, the conflict can be solved by a superior institution, namely the Association Region Stuttgart. By its jurisdiction for regional planning, the Association can oblige the suburban communities to take adequate measures with a view to the regional planning process. In the last decade, there was no

³ The regional team comprises about 70 staff and civil servants including the Stuttgart Region Economic Development Promotion Company (WRS) and those staff directly integrated into the Stuttgart Transport and Tariff Association (VVS).

need for this, but it is very likely that the local authorities fear this possibility and therefore are open-minded for negotiation.

Another important aspect for successful regional cooperation is that the Association Region Stuttgart, respectively the Regional Assembly, defines the regional overall concept ("Leitbild") and spreads these ideas all over the metropolitan area (Jouve/Lefèvre 1999). Thereby, the identification of elites and citizenry with the regional structures becomes more likely. Furthermore, the involved cities and towns have clear ideas of the regional development plan. In the case of voluntary cooperation with weak institutional structures, an overarching vision is rarely given. In practice, the municipalities work together for special purposes and not on wider regional development. Without the definition and monitoring function of a strong regional (political) institution, the negotiation process of the involved actors is much more complicated and the risk of egoistic behaviour far higher.

In the exercise of its competences, the Association takes up strategic as well as operational tasks, just as stipulated by modern administration concepts (Benz 2003). The Regional Assembly is responsible for strategic decisions like the regional plan or the public transport concept. The administration of the Association under the leadership of the regional director tries to implement the strategic decisions in cooperation with many other actors at the regional level. Therefore, networking and network management is an important instrument to accomplish this mission. Under the head of the Association, a lot of initiatives, networks and associated companies were created in the last decades, all contributing to regional development. These actors are more or less coupled with the Association (see chapter 2.4.). So this form of metropolitan governance operates with a lean management, based on political-administrative control, and delegates operational tasks to relatively autonomous but still closely connected actors. The control function is exercised by the Regional Assembly and the regional management with his executive director. To sum up, the control instruments of the Assembly are strategic decisions, jurisdiction and budget, while the control instruments of the regional management are communication and cooperation. Experts from the Association participate in these public and private networks and are thus able to control the implementation process.

2.2. Implementation speed of the reform politics

Some actors, like parts of the Christian Democrats or Free Voters or the involved municipalities and counties, had been very critical about the constitution of a regional Association. Nevertheless, after the adoption of the federal state law dealing with regional cooperation in 1994, the implementation speed increased very

much compared to the years before. In the two previous decades, the implementation process had required much more time. In Baden-Wuerttemberg regional plans had been devised since 1973 and renewed at 10 to 15 year intervals - a process that had stretched over several years in many cases (Heinz et al. 2004). Regional planning is also currently no one-way street: municipalities and districts work together on the planning at several stages. There are also associations and authorities, chambers of commerce and unions to be heard. But in contrast to the past, only in very few situations no agreement is reached. In that case, it is up to the directly elected regional representatives to decide and to continue the reform process (Benz 2003).

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

2.3. Acceptance of the reform politics

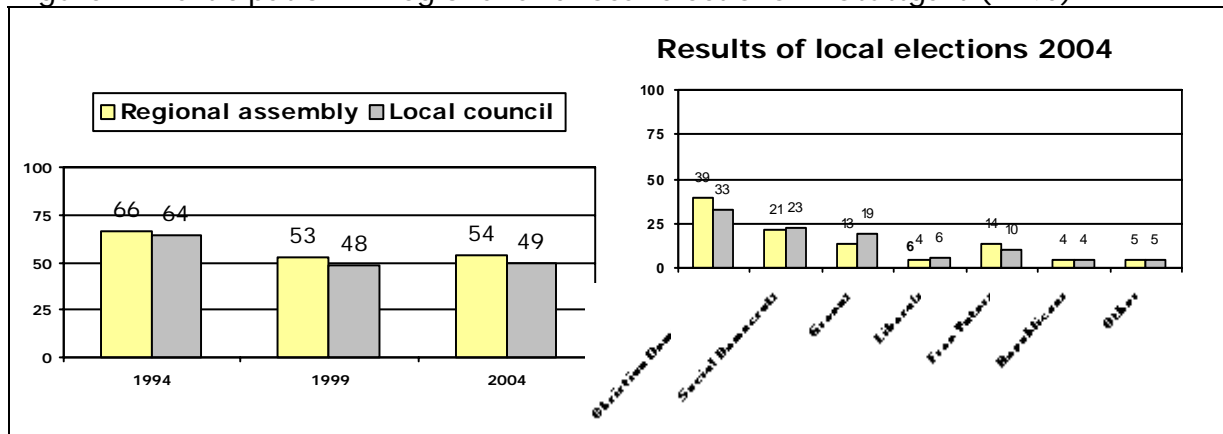
In his international comparison of cooperation in urban agglomerations, Heinz mentioned different proponents and opponents of regional reform politics. His findings will serve as a guideline to discuss the acceptance of the Stuttgart reform model on the part of the elites and the citizenry. In five countries, initiators and proponents of regional cooperation have been the central or federal government; the core cities and their representatives; the industry and its actors; and professionally involved actors and media. As opponents and critics the researchers identified middle-tier government and existing associations of local authorities; suburban governments and outlying communities; urban residents and population groups as well as experts (Heinz 2000: 22). As we will see, similar observations can be made in the case of Stuttgart.

The land of Baden-Wuerttemberg promoted regional cooperation and adopted in 1994 a state law for “the reinforcing the cooperation in the region of Stuttgart”. One reason for this decision was the necessity to strengthen Greater Stuttgart in a strong international and inter-regional competition (Heinz et al. 2004). The City of Stuttgart also advocated the regional cooperation since it faced rising prob-

lems of suburbanization. As did the local industry including big business firms like Daimler-Chrysler, Porsche or IBM, which were mostly interested in simplifying political and administrative structures for their projects. The idea to foster economic prosperity and regional developing through stronger regional cooperation was transported and enforced by the local media (Steinacher 2002). Interestingly, the attitudes of political parties and their representatives towards the Association differ very much depending on their institutional affiliation. Members of the Regional Assembly and the federal state council (Landtag) have more positive orientations towards the Association than members of the county council (Kreistag) or the local council of the core city (Stadtrat). However, the positions do often vary in dependence of the different personalities. Hence, generalizations are rather difficult to make.

As regards the citizenry, we can expect that there is a relatively high acceptance of the new regional parliament. The citizens do not have to fear a loss of democratic control with the new political and administrative level because the regional assembly is directly legitimated. In 2004, the population of Greater Stuttgart decided for the third time on the composition of their Regional Assembly, and elected 90 representatives for a 5-year-term. Lacking comprehensive data on the perception of the regional institutions among Greater Stuttgart's citizens, we are constrained to consider voter turnout in regional elections as a proxy of public acceptance of the metropolitan governance reform process. High voter turnout may be interpreted as citizens' acknowledging and valuating the relevance of the newly created political arena. The comparison between the participation in local and regional elections shows a slightly higher rate of participation at the regional level (see figure 7). This finding is quite remarkable as we would have expected participation to be higher on the local level since the local electorate is larger. In fact, the electoral law allows foreigners from EU countries to cast votes in local elections, whereas only German citizens can participate in regional elections. Obviously, one has to keep in mind that many EU foreigners abstain from participation in local election. Nevertheless, the high regional voter turnout suggests that the citizenry of Greater Stuttgart shows interest in the regional authorities and somehow acknowledges their importance. However, the whole issue will need further clarification by means of a representative survey on the perception and acceptance of metropolitan governance structures.

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



Source: Association Region Stuttgart, City of Stuttgart

The promoters of the regional cooperation spent a lot of time convincing the population that the regional level is an important economic and living area. In this regard, the concept “Portal Region Stuttgart” brings together the Association Region Stuttgart and some other associations like the “Culture Region Stuttgart”, the “Sports Regions Stuttgart”, the “Dialog Forum of the churches” or the gender-oriented association “FrauenRatschlag”, which all represent civil society actors. The “Forum Region Stuttgart” is another non-party regional association providing information about “the real regional picture” and supporting citizen engagement. The association formed by elites from different sectors like politics, economy, culture, education, churches, media or environment gives awards to people, projects or institutions which enhance the regional image, structure or solidarity. The existence of this regional cooperation of multiple actors from the political-administrative and civic sphere leads us to the conclusion that one important aim of the “Portal Region Stuttgart” is to support a sustainable regional development in close concert with the citizenry. Since many regional experts are actively involved in the “Portal Region Stuttgart” their acceptance of the regional cooperation seems to be relatively high. Yet, this does not automatically imply unanimous acceptance of the reform politics by the Association Region Stuttgart. Some experts criticise the powerlessness of the Association and the reduced transparency of responsibilities for the citizenry and promote instead other (weaker) ways of regional cooperation (Henke 1994).

In 1998, the Federal State Ministry of Economic launched a region-wide survey about the acceptance of the reform model in Stuttgart. Concerning the acceptance of the suburban communities and counties, the survey noticed some criticism of these actors, mainly focused on the share of the costs generated by big regional projects like new fair outside central Stuttgart. It is worth noting that the financial burden of such projects has to be shared by all municipalities involved in the Association. These compulsory financial settings evoke resistance by the municipalities given their increasing fiscal constraints and financial alloca-

tions to other associations. Some municipalities filed a lawsuit against the share of costs for projects at the regional level - and this although the regional allocation only amounts to ten percent of the Association's budget (Heinz et al. 2004: 44).

Besides the regional financial allocation, conflicts arise from formal jurisdiction over several regional tasks like public transport or retail industry. For example, the suburbs encourage the settlement of big economic centres in their areas while the core city of Stuttgart and the Association Region Stuttgart vote against this "Americanization of the suburbs" (Steinacher 1998). Furthermore, the counties involved in the Association and the federal state government criticize the regional cooperation because they fear a loss of competences and power and see jurisdictional problems as well. Several examples of mixed jurisdiction have led to conflicts concerning, for instance, public transport or sewage disposal. In the metropolitan area of Stuttgart, eight actors are responsible for public transport: the federal state, the Association Region Stuttgart, the city of Stuttgart and the five counties (Steinacher 2002).

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

2.4. The political and organizational fallout of the reform politics

The organizational fallout of the reform politics in Greater Stuttgart was very high (see figure 8). Business promotion, tourism marketing, and the coordination of local public transport are handled – in collaboration with other regional organisations and companies – by private-sector subsidiary companies. The administration of the Association participated -with the support of the Regional Assembly- in the foundation of these organisations and companies. The Association is a regular member to most of these bodies and coordinates their activities with the regional policies of his own management. Only one year after the constitution of the Association, a subsidiary company to strengthen regional economic development and tourist marketing was set up (WRS). The temporary loss of over 100.000 jobs between 1992 and 1997 was a clear warning to the region of Stuttgart which had become accustomed to success. To forestall the loss of further jobs well in time, the WRS set up the Regional Employment Agency (Rebag). Its task is to inform companies at risk and their staff of labour market-related political instruments and to develop specific employment and retraining strategies. Beyond these examples, there is a company for marketing and tourism consisting of the Association Region Stuttgart, the core city of Stuttgart and 20 other

municipalities. The Association is a shareholder in this company like in some others.

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

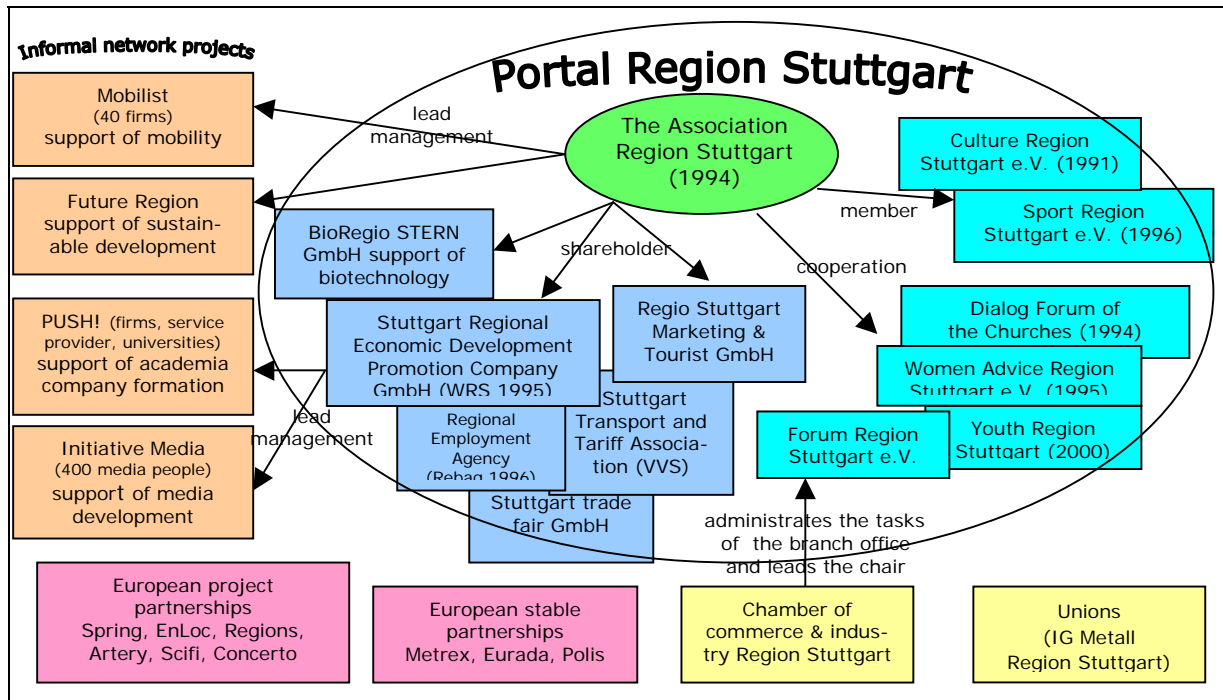


Figure MWR, www.region-stuttgart.org

The strategy of the Association consists furthermore of acting as a mediator between network partners who share the same ambition, namely the development of the metropolitan area. Once the networks have been successfully set up, the projects run on their own with the lead management either in the hands of the Association (Mobilist, BioRegion, Future Region) or the WRS (PUSH!, Initiative Media). Moreover the Association has developed stable European partnerships with Metrex, Eurada and Polis as well as some European project partnerships like Spring or Enloc.

Apart from these mostly economic oriented networks, local and social initiatives build up which support the regional idea and realize projects on behalf of their interests. The Association cooperates very closely with all of them; to some of them, it is a regular member. In this context, the citizens' initiative "Forum Region Stuttgart" will serve as a communication forum for regional interests. It was initiated by the president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and for that, the Chamber administrates the workings of the branch office and leads the chair. Their members promote cultural, sportive, scientific, ecological and innovative ideas to enhance the importance of Greater Stuttgart. Simultaneously, the Association has created its own forum „Future Region of Stuttgart“ which organizes the Local Agendas 21 in the region.

Notwithstanding the benefits and the good performance of the Association, the reform politics is not finished yet. Most actors support the necessity of the Asso-

ciation, but discuss possible future reform steps as well. On the one hand, some proponents of stronger regional governance like business firms and unions require a higher task concentration in the Association; on the other hand, critics like the suburban municipalities want to conserve the status quo (Iwer/Dispan 1999). The mayor of Stuttgart supports the French solution, because the "Communautés urbaines" exercise multiple competencies and can raise their own taxes. Others, like the representatives of the counties or of the association of municipalities, want to transform the Association into a special-purpose association and favour the abolishment of the Regional Assembly (Heinz et al. 2004). Against the background of this ongoing debate, the director of the Association Region Stuttgart, experienced by ten years of regional cooperation, names two limits of voluntary cooperation: financial resources and local competences (Steinacher 1998). If sufficient financial resources are available, cooperation projects can be realized, but in the current situation each actor defends his competences and responsibilities. The allocation of financial resources and sufficient capacities of influence are considered as important preconditions for realizing common regional. Steinacher argues that two different options of cooperation are pertinent to the Region of Stuttgart: The reinforcing of regional collaboration and the implementation of an autonomous regional level dealing with a certain scope of problems. In his opinion, the former shows the way network projects, which generate new products and services in the region, should follow. This explicitly applies to the network of municipalities which can only handle its tasks through a reinforced cooperation at the regional level. Although effective, reinforced regional management appears to be indispensable to ensure decent living conditions (e.g. for a regional transport concept) existing associations of local and federal state authorities obstruct this development. Nevertheless, the Association Region Stuttgart strove for additional rights and allocation-free revenues (e.g. portion in petroleum tax) in the past. In the year 1999, the Baden-Wuerttemberg Landtag - the state assembly - passed an amendment Act in granting the Association Region Stuttgart some additional rights.

Besides the ongoing dispute over more or less competences, resources or the suitable degree of institutionalization, the question how to define properly the size of the regional territory raises some concerns. Some critics argue that most of the tasks and duties metropolitan governance is supposed to fulfil overlap the territorial boundaries of the core city and the five counties around. Consequently, these people demand an enlargement of the Greater Region. Similar to this is the idea of a "regional municipality", which would imply the abandon of existing counties and the lead management of the Association Region Stuttgart, or the creation of a "regional county". The advocates of a regional district want a sharp

separation between local and regional tasks and require regional steering, bundling, and supra-local control functions on an independent financial basis (Heinz et al. 2004). The former mayor of Stuttgart supported the first solution and the director of the Association voted for the latter. In these perspectives, the definition of a metropolitan area does not have to refer to existing counties. On the contrary, as urban sprawl does not stop at traditional administrative boundaries (see Walter-Rogg 2005), it seems to be more fruitful to take into account real urban phenomena which lead to serious problems (Steinacher 2002). Indeed, the current definition of metropolitan areas by the Federal Office for Building and Planning is based on the commuter changes within a region. By this definition, the metropolitan area of Stuttgart does not include 179 municipalities with 2.6 million inhabitants, but 301 with 3.4 million inhabitants (see Walter-Rogg 2005). So the reform debate is still going on: "As in the past, a reform would therefore be adopted that invites new reform recommendations even at the time of its implementation" (Heinz et al. 2004: 15).

Conclusion

This article addressed the question which reform strategies are being developed and implemented in Germany in order to cope with the challenges ongoing urban sprawl poses to metropolitan governance. Although only few aspects referring to questions on regional reform models and their fruitfulness in Germany could be discussed, the analysis of cooperation models in the biggest metropolitan areas, focussing on information about tasks, competences, resources and legitimization, leads to several interesting conclusions. Kübler's typology (metropolitan reform, public choice, new regionalism) may undoubtedly serve as a guideline to understand the big picture of metropolitan governance reform in Germany. However, a closer look suggests that regional governance can take divers forms on a continuum from weakly to strongly institutionalized solutions. Indeed, the range goes from loose purpose-oriented networks (Dresden) and state-run regional planning (Berlin/Brandenburg, Munich) over state-run local mixtures (Hamburg, Halle/Leipzig) to strong institutionalized associations at the regional level (Frankfurt, Dortmund/Essen, Stuttgart, Hanover). As a result, we can conclude that the cooperation structure obviously depends on the particular spatial conditions and problems in a region. These conditions seem to determine the competences and tasks of the association and the conflicts it has to handle. Once more, we found support for the contention that different metropolitan areas with various economic, societal and cultural contexts require different governance solutions. In this regard, the tradition and experience of existing cooperation at the regional level surely plays an important role (see Heinz et al. 2004).

The second part of our contribution focussed on the governance reform process in the Stuttgart metropolitan area with particular attention being drawn to the implementation speed, the reform acceptance and its political and organizational fall-out. Regional politics in the metropolitan area of Stuttgart demonstrate that reform is an ongoing process which requires the consideration of different preferences and aims of involved actors. Although all of them support an efficient and sustainable development of their metropolitan area, their egoism often blockades ambitious concepts. Nevertheless, Stuttgart is a good example of "regional governance" coordinated by a strongly institutionalized core institution. Part of its success is certainly due to a rather inventive way of associating elements of hierarchy and cooperation as well as control, networking and communication activities. While for several tasks a strong leadership is given, the Association realizes governance also through its role as a mediator and "networker" between public and private-sector actors, which are less formally organized. Because of this specific institutional structure, combined with lean management and network strategies, the reform model of Stuttgart is in the eyes of many researchers one of the most interesting and effective ones (Benz 2003) and makes a good case for holistic approaches to metropolitan governance issues.

The case of Stuttgart stresses two other important conditions for successful metropolitan cooperation, namely the definition of a framework for regional cooperation from a higher political-administrative level and a relatively long tradition of regional cooperation (Steinacher 2002). The realization of the metropolitan governance structure was therefore a specific combination of federal state reform politics (top-down) and cooperation in the Greater Region of Stuttgart (bottom-up). It was the right point in time for a change under a big coalition of Christian and Social Democrats, but political changes are not sufficient. In addition, a region needs some effective proponents to push the idea of a prospering metropolitan area. Attractive institutional solutions are a necessary, but not sufficient condition for governance reform to be crowned with success (Benz 2003: 512).

Future research on regional governance has to specify more precisely the relevant conditions for different forms of cooperation. Additionally, the political control of relatively autonomous networks and companies as well as the quality of democratic legitimation should be analyzed in more detail. In this regard, the collection of systematic data on the perception of metropolitan institutions and networks by the citizenry is vital. Metropolitan areas involved in governance reform processes might also be an interesting laboratory for revisiting Peterson's assumption that urban policies structure urban politics (Peterson 1981). Some modern urban challenges may require intense sharing of competences, while 'soft' coordination and management might suit other issues fairly well. Hence, systematically exploring the linkage between different policy issues, from trans-

port management and territorial planning to education and socio-economic matters, and the structural intensity of regional cooperation will be one of the challenges to future metropolitan studies.

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