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Foregrounding Urban Agendas

The New Urban Issue in European
Experiences of Policy-Making

 Springer

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Introduction. Making Sense of the Urban Agendas: Studies in the Production and Use of the Urban in Agenda Discourses

Abstract This introduction presents and briefly outlines the different intentions, institutional frameworks, and policy pathways of urban visions, taking into account the growing relevance of Urban Agendas in the contemporary scenario and, in general, the strategic relevance that the Urban Agenda-setting is acquiring for supranational actors and national, regional, and local tiers of government in the last years. This book focuses on the urban dimension in the different agendas in European experiences. Moreover, the issues of how, why, and who produces Urban Agendas for implementation in several—European, national, regional, metropolitan, local—contexts are at the book’s core with the objective of providing a cross-sectoral perspective between the chapters, able to explain the narratives and intentions of the new multi-scalar and highly interconnected agenda-setting scenes.

Keywords Urban Agenda • Agenda-setting • Urban dimension • Globalization

Conceptualizing the Agenda: In What Sense Urban?

This book has its origin in a special session organized by the editors for the Regional Studies Association Annual Conference (Università della Svizzera Italiana, Lugano, Switzerland, 3–6 June 2018) and conceived as an opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the “Urban Agendas” with colleagues of different European countries and with different backgrounds and expertise. As a result of the session, the proposal of this volume engages with the aim of understanding the different intentions, institutional frameworks, and policy pathways of urban visions, taking into account the growing relevance of Urban Agendas in the contemporary scenario and, in general, the strategic relevance that the Urban Agenda-setting is acquiring for supranational actors and national, regional, and local tiers of government in the last years.

The list of contents reveals the multiple geographies of Urban Agendas, in theoretical debates and their practical mobilization in specific contexts of social, political, and economic realities. This book sets a framework aimed to shed light on a number of issues: What are Urban Agendas? How are they constructed? How do stakeholders, interest groups, and citizens influence the agenda? How do cities relate to agendas? Is the urban dimension still relevant in today's world characterized by all kinds of flows and networks? How and why is a definition of "the urban" privileged over others? These are just some of the key questions which have shaped the research developed along the different chapters. Nonetheless, in this introductory section, the two basic categories of questions are: What is on the agenda? And, what is the agenda status?

First of all, we have to investigate what an agenda is. Agenda-setting, in the policy analysis scholarly research, is defined as a process, by which problems and alternative solutions "gain or lose" public and policy elite attention (Bachrach and Baratz 1962, Fischer et al. 2007). The study of agenda-setting is the study of social change (Dearing and Rogers 1996), as well as the analysis of the economic dimension and the correlation of power with regard to the urban domain.

A crucial issue to understand the agenda-setting process is the meaning of the term agenda. An agenda is a collection of social constructed problems, understandings of causes, symbols, solutions, and other elements of public issues that come to the attention of policy-makers and their governmental officials. An agenda may be a list of concrete projects and policies that are privileged during a legislature, but also includes a series of beliefs and narratives about the existence, construction, and relevance of problems and how they should be addressed by the government, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, or through the joint action of some or all of these stakeholders.

In this book, we address the rise and increasing development of Urban Agendas—at different scales—as a multiple, circular, and trans-scalar learning giving place to soft and hard institutionalization policy processes. Within the chapters, we portray the rise of the "urban" and the discursive framing from global to local perspectives in the form of agenda-setting with the objective of understanding its contribution to transform the existing urban policy-making scenario.

Our contention is that the recognition and accreditation of relevant Urban Agendas are not a neutral, casual, or simple process. Adopting the view proposed by Brenner (2018), we want to avoid the result of an all-encompassing, trans-contextual, and neocolonial metanarrative of the Urban Agenda concept. On the contrary, the many different experiences reported in this book remark the power-laden actualities of difference, place specificity, struggle, and practice.

The title of this book emphasizes the focus on the urban dimension in the different agendas in European experiences. Moreover, the issues of how, why, and who produces Urban Agendas for implementation in several—European, national, regional, metropolitan, local—contexts are at the book's core with the objective of

providing interconnections between the chapters, able to explain the narratives and intentions of the new multi-scalar and highly interconnected agenda-setting scenes. The urban age thesis explored and analysed by a number of chapters of this book is a prevailing ideology seeking to frame contemporary massive urban transformations with a central message: economic growth is the key to unlocking vibrant, sustainable, and liveable cities for all. Promoted by both private (e.g. World Economic Forum and McKinsey Global Institute) and public global international organizations (e.g. UN-Habitat and World Bank), the Urban Age universalizing thesis argues for smarter forms of growth that are more closely tied to the efficient management of risks, governance, mobility, and security in the world's global cities (McKinsey Global Institute 2011, World Economic Forum 2018). This dominant narrative has legitimized a set of policies (smart cities, creative cities, sustainable cities, innovative cities, etc.) derived primarily from mature capitalist nations. According to Soederberg and Walks (2018), the chapters of the volume challenge the urban age thesis for its empirical and theoretical limits that serve, among other things, to homogenize urban space, without disrupting the formation of neoliberalized, financialized accumulation by reproduction of inequalities. While all empirically based, all the chapters of this book strengthen this perspective and provide insights into the many ways in which contemporary Urban Agendas are being articulated and governed in and through the complex and contested dynamics of global capitalism in Europe.

At the same time, populism is diffusing widely in the European Union and a common feature of these movements is their anti-EU positions. Accordingly, the imaginary power of the nation state seems to have risen again with a revival against the roles of the cities. At the same time, pervasive metropolitanization phenomena, in European stateless nations, are increasingly shaping calls for devolution: Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Scotland (Calzada 2018).

Furthermore, globalization has brought with it a growing awareness of the construction of the "urban" dimension. As the chapters of this book display, regions, cities, European Union matter, and various forms of urban are on the agenda.

Understanding how the urban is constructed through agendas in context, looking at different scales is one of the biggest challenges faced by urban studies today. Another important challenge is the recognition of the role of civil society organizations and movements in the making of the future Urban Agendas (e. g., the "Greta Thunberg effect" on worldwide students' protest for climate, the increasing relevance of organized local groups to stop or determine urban policy decisions). Along with the relevance of the civil society role, the growing relevance of the Mayors arises as highly determinant in the identification and visibility of policy challenges that are getting relevant in supra-local agendas (e.g. the important role developed by Mayors in the Paris Climate Conference of 2015 (COP 21). All too often Urban Agendas emerge as a process arranged by local, regional, national institutional coalitions. Consequently, there is an urgent task for scholars to engage with different frames of reference.

According to these contents and contexts, this book is concerned with the following main objectives:

- To promote a multidisciplinary observation and interpretation of contemporary Urban Agendas by integrating urban policy, and planning approaches, with urban economy, administrative and policy studies, and geography.
- To question the role that Urban Agendas play in moulding new forms of urban change in the implosion/explosion of the urban dimension (Brenner 2014), and how these relate to the current political–economic and processes at different scales. That is, also by underlining evidences, contradictions, and tensions in how these new Urban Agendas are being mobilized or blocked by different public and private actors.
- To provide the first chance, accessible worldwide, for representing the complexity of the contemporary urban phenomena within the specific European spatial context. That is, one of the main and most meaningful “urban” platforms in the world, with a variety of Urban Agenda-setting experiences developed at different institutional levels, crossed by opposed tensions and impulses, such as governance and institutional contested dynamics, urban decentralization and recentralization; intensive and extensive urban transformations; urban change through both shrinkage and regeneration processes.
- To observe and critically argue ongoing urban political capacity, exploring institutional and economic resources, political leadership, styles of governance relations, territorial networks (Cole and Payne 2016).
- To challenge traditional interpretative categories and assumptions concerning urban policies, starting from both the effects of the global crisis and the path dependency of urban and regional development.
- To understand how agenda priorities are defined and what stakeholders and interest groups have the capacity to impact the agenda content and process.

Summary of Chapters

After this introductory chapter, in which we show the complexity of the contemporary urban phenomena through the agenda-setting tool, the book is organized in four main parts.

Part I covers Chaps. 1–4. Chapter 1 describes the content of the Urban Agenda for the European Union from a critical perspective, focusing on new, controversial EU city relations and on the interpretation of the urban issue, respectively. Chapter 2 focuses on the Spanish Urban Agenda (SUA). The multi-level governance issue becomes a relevant aspect that needs to be addressed by the SUA in order to become an effective and transformative tool. Chapter 3 describes urban policies in Portugal, claiming that a Portuguese national Urban Agenda has been further Consolidated and improved since the 1990s, having the European Union as

one of its key drivers. The aim of Chap. 4 is to explore urbanization and shrinking city tendencies in Latvia, a country with a small number of residents in the context of global urbanization. The “doughnut effect” will be explored in the capital city Riga and ten municipalities nearby.

Part II covers Chaps. 5–7. Chapter 5 describes the multi-level tensions between the local, regional, and central levels of government in relation to the development process and implementation of City Region Deals in Scotland. Chapter 6 argues the challenges for political legitimacy posed by the emphasis on—and role of—cities in framing national and regional and, increasingly, global, economic development. It focuses on two regions: the Øresund Region (now Greater Copenhagen) and the Capital City Region of Berlin-Brandenburg. Chapter 7 presents the evolution of policy at national, regional, and local government level in Poland in relation to the metropolization process at the national, regional, and local level.

Part III covers Chaps. 8–10. Chapter 8 explores the emergence and relevance of urban and metropolitan issues in German national policies drawing attention to policy shifts: firstly, towards metropolitan regions in the mid-1990s and, secondly, towards cities of all sizes in the mid-2000s. Chapter 9 elaborates a comparative analysis of the recent processes of formation of metropolitan governments for large city regions in two European countries: England and France. Chapter 10 focuses on the effects of city-regionalism on state spatiality and on state as a territorial political community in the Finnish context.

Part IV covers Chaps. 11–13. Chapter 11 aims to reflect on the role played in general by regions with regard to city policies and, specifically, within the framework of Urban Agendas. To this end, it analyses the case of Andalusia in Spain, the country’s first region to develop an Urban Agenda. Chapter 12 focuses on the Madrid 2030 Agenda, describing a series of programmes and instruments implemented in the city of Madrid particularly during the period 2015–2019. Chapter 13 investigates the “implicit” Milan Urban Agenda, focusing on the rescaling of both urban planning tools, and metropolitan government and governance.

The different parts exhibit the main common spatial scales of each agenda. Nonetheless, the chapters underline remarkable questions from the perspective of the current debate on relational spaces and scales, and porous borders of cities and regions (Paasi et al. 2018). This approach contests the vision of territories as mere bounded containers or recipients of policies. In fact, according to Paasi and Zimmerbauer (2016) borders of regions—and cities—must be grasped not as simple lines, but rather as spatial and temporal phenomena. They can be open and closed, related and contingent to manifold social, political practices and multi-scalar policies.

Finally, this book closes with the conclusion, a chapter that summarizes the main findings of this book and underline the urgent need for new research on contemporary Urban Agendas to achieve a strong analysis on current processes of reterritorialization.

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Simonetta Armondi
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Part I
**Multi-scalar Agendas at the National
and Supranational Level**

Chapter 1

The Urban Agenda for the European Union: EU Governmentality and Urban Sovereignty in New EU-City Relations?



Simonetta Armondi

Abstract The Urban Agenda for the European Union forms one of the elements of contemporary European Union policy framework. The chapter analyses the content of the Urban Agenda from a critical perspective, focusing on new EU-city relations and on the interpretation of the urban issue, respectively. The chapter proposes that the Urban Agenda ought to be conceptualized as a ‘dispositif’ of governmentality for the construction of the European Union’s future spatiality. The complex relationship between powers and territories is at the centre of the governmentality approach. On the one hand, the Urban Agenda supports new ways of organizing and managing European territories with new multi-level partnerships. On the other hand, despite its voluntary basis, it produces new territories by both mobilizing a new spatial order and introducing implicit considerations in order to distinguish between the ‘winner’ and ‘loser’ territories, with the demise of the regional scale. Therefore, in the wake of the urban age ideology, the Urban Agenda discourse counts as a ‘soft’ powerful mechanism of political legitimization of a new urban sovereignty endorsed by the EU, which counters the most recent national developments since the global economic crisis and the substantial consensus that Eurosceptics have been achieved within national governments.

Keywords Urban Agenda · Urban age · EU governmentality · Urban sovereignty · Spatiality

1.1 Introduction: The ‘Urban Turn’ in the EU Agenda

The growing interest in urban spatiality as a central constituent of the territory of the European Union has been part of the emerging field of Urban Agenda (UA) for the European Union (EU). In 2016, the Pact of Amsterdam, agreed upon by the EU Ministers responsible for Urban Matters, established the main features of the Urban Agenda for the EU. Grounded on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality,

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the Urban Agenda is an ongoing process focused on three pillars of EU policy-making and implementation: “better regulation, better funding and better knowledge”.

Nevertheless, the perspective developed to address urban challenges is persistent rather than wholly new interest for EU institutions. Historically, the relationship between the EU and cities began in the 1950s, when the Council of Europe created a consultative body, the Conference of Local Authorities of Europe in 1957 (known as the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe). It has been consolidated over the past two decades, a process which scholars have described in the research stream on urban ‘Europeanization’: the peculiar, local-level aspect of the overall Europeanization of EU member states (Atkinson 2001; Parkinson 2005). There has been feedback, answers and policy actions on the part of policymakers or policy actors at all levels of government and governance.

Research in urban studies on Europeanization has focused on the reworking of policies and policy processes, converging around top-down and bottom-up logic, where cities not only implement EU policies, norms and programmes, but also become actors in the EU arena in their own right (Hamedinger and Wolffhardt 2010). Urban areas have of course also obtained funding under the mainstream Structural Funds programmes since 1989. Particularly, they have also been the focus of specific actions, such as the Community Initiative URBAN and URBAN II between 1994 and 2006. In those Community Initiatives, there is a clear attempt to share and extend a common ‘European’ methodology for sustainable urban development (EC 2009).

In order to move towards the Urban Agenda for the EU, we should not start from the Europe 2020 Strategy—in which cities do not have a clear role—but, rather, from all the documents, communications and statements the European Union has devoted to the casting of an EU urban archetype. Before the UA, starting from *Towards an Urban Agenda for the European Union* (1997), the *Lille Agenda* (2000), the *Rotterdam Urban Acquis* (2004), the Communication of Commission of the European Communities: *Cohesion Policy and Cities—The urban contribution to growth and jobs in the regions* (2006), the *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities* (2007), the *Toledo Declaration* (2010), the *Cities of Tomorrow Report* (2011), the *Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020* (2011) and up until the CITIES Forum (2014), an articulated EU narrative on cities has been developed, but it has largely ignored the transformation of space that these changes entail. In all of these EU documents and initiatives, we can observe the attempt to construct a ‘conventional wisdom’ in terms of knowledge (way of thinking) and action (ways of doing) around the urban question.

Nevertheless, despite its long history, there are unanswered and pressing problems: To what extent should the EU level be involved in formulating and implementing an urban policy? Has the EU the power, respecting subsidiarity, to deal with the contemporary urban question? Starting from the statement that “the policy response at the European and national level has been slow and piecemeal, with many but poorly integrated sectorial initiatives” (EC 2014: 3), the latest documents on the Urban Agenda for the EU have been committed in a joint working programme towards the UA with the Pact of Amsterdam (2016) upon the invitation by the Netherlands Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU) to the Informal Meeting

of EU Ministers responsible for Urban Matters. The Urban Agenda for the EU, for the first time, directly involves cities in EU policy-making, with UA cities no longer only the object, or recipient, of EU policy-making. By means of an innovative working method and multi-level partnerships (EC 2017; Potjer and Hajer 2017), the UA epitomizes, according to many scholars, the nature of the EU as a site of political innovation that seeks to bring into being new ways of governing (Walters and Haahr 2005: 164; Moisisio and Luukkonen 2015: 830).

The chapter intends to produce a sympathetic critique of the UA, recognizing that it potentially could have some implications for urban political geographies in Europe. The UA forms one of the many ‘spaces of Europeanization’ (Clark and Jonas 2008), which makes it possible to articulate the EU city interplay as a territorial polity. The chapter seeks to contribute to the conceptual challenge posed by the UA by questioning conventional assumptions and ways of thinking about a ‘neutral’ urban agenda at the EU scale. This is done by conceptualizing UA through two lenses: spatiality and governmentality. This is because UA essentially regards the ‘governability’ of urban spatiality ‘at another scale’ and, therefore, inevitably engages with territorial politics, with the apparent demise of the national state and regional scales in the document. This is the result produced by an increasingly city-centric competitiveness agenda in European societies, driven by the urban age ideology with growing concentration of economic opportunities for urban nodes and networks and the ‘rest’ left outside, or in-between these nodes, recently becoming politically animated by populist and anti-system revenge (Herrschel and Newman 2017; Rodríguez-Pose 2018).

There has been a debate, in particular in the arena of international relations studies, as to whether the concept of governmentality can be operationalized beyond the sphere of the state level (Kangas 2015). Scholars have undoubtedly found the concept relevant at the global level (Larner and Walters 2004), but analysis of the implications of spatialities for the exercise of powers and the nature of scales themselves—their consequences and effects—at the EU level, remain under-theorized and are too often taken for granted.

A perspective of governmentality allows a conceptualization of the processual aspects of the production of spatiality in the UA—as a governmentality *dispositif*—not limited to one fixed scale—e.g. the global, the local, the national—or in terms of an institutional approach, but rather as a “practical activity that can be studied, historicized and specified at the level of the rationalities, programmes, techniques, and subjectivities which underpin it and give it form and effect” (Walters 2012: 2).

Processual approaches to the production of spatiality have been mobilized extensively in the field of critical urban, regional and state studies (Brenner 1991, 2004), and scholars continue to explore new spatial configurations that prompt a recasting of our typical broad labels. This chapter argues, nonetheless, that the conceptualizations of socio-spatial dynamics that were developed in these pioneering analyses of urban and state spatiality may be mobilized to explore the production and transformation of EU spatiality as well. Accordingly, EU spatiality is hypothesized as a dynamic, transformative process rather than as a fixed thing, container or platform.

In what sense is EU spatiality a process? As with the terms ‘city’ and ‘state’, the EU seemingly connotes a fixed, physical ‘object’—in this case a closed institutional

system that occupies a bordered geographical territory in which country members basically enter or exit. For instance, the difficult Brexit transition period well demonstrates this paradox. The notion of the EU, much like the notion of the state or the city, is arguably among the paradigmatic exemplars of the pervasive reification of social dynamics in the contemporary social sciences, as underlined by the well-known territorial trap—acknowledged by Agnew (1994)—namely the tendency of the disciplines to try to pin processes down to reified spatial frameworks.

On one side, the urban—according to Harvey (1978) along with Brenner and Schmid (2015)—and, on the other side, the state—according to Brenner (2004)—must be understood simultaneously as a presupposition, an arena and a consequence of the conflictual, continually changing forms of capitalism. A comparable methodological strategy can be advanced to conceptualize the EU spatial process. The geography of the EU, incorporated in the Urban Agenda, must be concurrently regarded as a presupposition, an arena and a consequence of dynamically evolving and conflicting socio-spatial relations.

The chapter argues that the space of EU urban areas is not simply a gap filled by means of the agenda setting. Instead, through UA, spatialities are actively produced, reproduced and transformed in diverse institutional sites and at a variety of geographical scale. More drastically, an interpretation of the way in which UA mobilizes—rescales—urban space in the attempt to position itself and the relationship between cities and the EU in the global capitalist economy¹ is provided. Likewise, it is assumed that the urban imaginary delivered by UA could deeply influence urban policies and planning, but certainly this relation is not scrutinized in depth. Instead, the chapter analyses and deconstructs the *ratio* of UA.

The emerging Urban Agenda document is the intermediate result of an ongoing process. There are a number of early responses and contributions to the UA by the member states and cities, e.g. from the Association of German Cities or the Dutch national Urban Agenda. At present, the transfer of UA concepts to the field of urban development policies is just beginning. The chapter focuses on the production of the UA discourse and is mainly grounded in theoretical reflections developing an analysis of UA documents and Orientation Papers.

The chapter proceeds through five sections. Section 2 argues for the spatial vocabulary adopted in the UA. Section 3 then considers UA through the multifaceted framework of governmentality studies. Section 4 discusses the themes which are at the core of UA. Finally, some conclusions related to potential risks and further research strands are drawn in Sect. 5.

¹Equally, European cities have played a role in the competition to acquire EU government offices and EU administrative and policy headquarters within their cities and territories. Brexit has been a major turning point in the geopolitical and geo-economic struggle between European cities to pull Europe's locational centre of gravity towards their respective territories, as was the case with the European Medicines Agency's relocation during the final competition between Milan and Amsterdam in 2018.

1.2 Urban Agenda's Spatialities: Urban Challenges and Territorial Solution

For a long time in EU regional policy, territories have been considered as 'static', pre-existing spatial categories over which policy and initiatives are conducted. Recent scholarly writings on the territorial/political nexus, in particular in political geography, point out that territory is a historically and geographically specific category "which is never complete, but always becoming" (Painter 2010: 1094; see also Moisiso 2008; Antonsich 2009; Elden 2010, 2013; Jonas 2011). Likewise, in urban research, the emergent approach of planetary urbanization (Brenner and Schmid 2015) contests historical and contemporary 'urban age' and 'city-centric'/'city-dominant' ideologies.

Territory is not just land; it is a major sociopolitical invention and, in parallel, a social construct. It is from a world-system perspective that global space has been partitioned for the sake of political authority, space in effect empowered by borders (Wallerstein 1976; Maier 2016: 1–2). The concept of territory has evolved over the last half millennium as societies, sometimes states and nations, imagined and organized the segments of the globe's surface on which they lived. These concepts and practices related to the construction of territory have continually changed along with the other major variables of human history, such as environment, technology and class divisions (Maier 2016: 3–4). These tendencies, assembled under the umbrella term of globalization,² suggest that the features of territories are changing quickly. Over the last quarter century, globalization has been imposed on the public imaginary as an unprecedented and irresistible dynamism—nonetheless oddly nourished by multifaceted local turbulences—undermining an identifiable geopolitical ordering of the world.

While the literature focuses on Europeanization, it could in part be criticized for taking a rather conservative approach to the question of EU spatiality, interpreting the spatial recalibration of Europe as a reorganization of existing spaces. Some key scholarly works have stressed the spatial dimensions of governance, the fixity and thickness of borders to understanding continental space. Contributions of scholars from the fields of geography, urban studies and spatial planning are exemplary of this 'spatial turn' (see Berezin and Schain 2003; Gualini 2006; Luukkonen 2014). Following Maier (2016), whether the EU can flourish without a greater amount of formal 'state-ness' has yet to be decided. The promotion of an agenda-driven approach³ illustrates that Western societies have perhaps reached the limit of territoriality as

²While assumed that the 'global' has been constructed as a social fact (Bartelson 2010), behind the current and confusing debates about definitive meaning, causes and consequences of globalization, there is recognizable "a wide yet largely tacit acceptance of the *factuality* of globalization as such, as a process of change taking place 'out there'" (Bartelson 2000: 180).

³This approach is exemplified by a number of policy agendas at different institutional scales: e.g. the Territorial Agenda for the Cohesion Policy, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the global 'New Urban Agenda' as part of the Habitat III process (see for critical analyses: Watson 2016; Parnell 2016; Caprotti et al. 2017).

an instrument of regulation, knowledge and welfare? The sustained debates over what sort of institution the EU actually is have revealed that the legal stipulations of sovereign nationhood have retained a strong grasp on Western thinking. Constructing the EU also entailed a debate over the imagined European space, the rights and obligations it included and the appropriate frontiers it comprised. Europeanization, as any other territorial process, is a historically evolving incessant process which takes temporally and geographically specific forms (Rovnyi and Bachmann 2012). Territorial, relational practices and spatial imageries are not mutually exclusive, but are deployed simultaneously in the territorializing processes. In other words, if territories are not merely demarcated pieces of land, but “decision space” (Maier 2016: 3) and sociopolitical processes, they then require continuous ‘upkeep’ and reproduction through “networked socio-technical practices” (Painter 2010: 1093).

The UA describes European spatiality as:

The Urban Agenda for the EU acknowledges the *polycentric* structure of Europe and the diversity (social, economic, territorial, cultural and historical) of Urban Areas across the EU. Furthermore, the Urban Agenda for the EU acknowledges the importance of Urban Areas of all sizes and contexts in the *further development* of the European Union. A growing number of *urban challenges* are of a *local nature*, but require a *wider territorial solution* (including urban-rural linkages) and cooperation within functional urban areas. At the same time, urban solutions have the potential to lead to wider territorial benefits. Urban Authorities therefore need to cooperate within their functional areas and with their surrounding regions, connecting and reinforcing territorial and urban policies. (Author’s emphasis, Pact of Amsterdam 2016: 4)

This definition presents the imagery of a territorially centralized and hierarchically organized nation state structure, in the UA, which has been replaced by the coexistent homogenous polycentrism (multiple centres rather than core–periphery distinction) and concepts—dismissed as simply esoteric by policymakers not so long ago—of territories (with indistinct boundaries) dependent on urban challenges. The spatial notion of polycentricism has also been important in moving away from the awareness that the EU failed in preventing the exacerbation of a core–periphery pattern of disadvantage and unbalanced growth (Rumford 2002).

Despite the ‘openness’ and the complexity of power relations within it, the UA prevails at a relatively widely shared understanding about the nature of European space and how it ought to be. This understanding leans on an EU-driven wisdom which promotes Europe as an unbounded space of connectivity and mobility. This wisdom has given rise in the UA to the idea of Europe as a polycentric urban system which consists of nodes and connecting corridors. Nonetheless, the structural separation of different levels in the UA partnerships, the working method for the partnerships and the strict nexus between priority themes and partnerships are rather problematic. Paradoxically, they assume geographical scales and spaces, once again, as pre-existing categories of analysis and disregard them as the products of agenda actions and practices.

The following sections demonstrate that conceptualizing UA as a *dispositif* of governmentality helps in understanding that continuous shifts are not merely a mechanical interchange between hierarchical levels of government but rather a multifaceted

‘upscaling’ and ‘rescaling’ (Armondi 2017) circulation and redefining of spatial visions, powers and knowledge that often take place beyond the formal structures of policy-making.

1.3 Urban Agenda as a Tool of Governmentality: Theoretical Background

As a process in which European Union spatialities are dissected, maintained and regulated, the emergent UA opens up a number of empirical and conceptual challenges for research. Even if the governmentalization of Europe and the associated mechanisms, tactics, tools, technologies and vocabularies through which the power and rule of the EU are effected have been abundantly examined, there has been fairly little research that has inquired into the spatiality of EU policy using the governmentality approach⁴.

The analysis proposed here is based on theoretical and methodological considerations taken from critical urban studies and, in particular, Michel Foucault’s concept of governmentality introduced in 1977–1978 during Foucault’s Lectures at the Collège de France (Foucault 2007). According to Burchell et al. (1991), there are many meanings of governmentality delineated by Foucault and, intentionally, there is no cohesive theory. Consequently, the governmentality approach is significant for probing the political/policy-making of the spatial order in a geo-historical context. The concept of governmentality refers, in this contribution, to the practices of subsumption of knowledge in the mechanisms of government and in the production of ‘police’ systems, broadly understood as discipline systems for the construction of new citizen subjectivities. Power is not only the product of active agents applying force and sovereignty to the bodies of the subjected (as it essentially was up until the eighteenth century), but rather the product of discursive tactics of actors who use scientific techniques to normalize social behaviour.

‘Government’ did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather, it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed—the government of children, of souls, of communities, of the sick (...) To govern, in this sense, is to control the possible field of action of others (Foucault 2002: 326–341).

A focus on ‘conduct’ leads to the definition of ‘governmentality’ as the ‘conduct of conducts’—the regulation (conduct) of behaviours (conducts). Governmentality exists to produce a governable mentality (of the subjects). In fact, governmentality involves the way in which subjects perceive themselves and form their identities through processes of government, which controls, supports or suppresses actions by separating what is ‘acceptable’ and what is ‘unacceptable’.

Foucault starts his reflection with the formation of the market town and the rise of urban planning. Market relations generate renewed challenges that pose different

⁴See groundbreaking writings such as Jensen and Richardson (2004), Walters and Haahr (2005), Swyngedouw (2005), Moisio and Luukkonen (2015).

dilemmas to the state. The police are a necessary consequence of this development. “These are the institutions prior to the police. The town and the road, the market, and the road network feeding the market (...) Police, then, as a condition of existence of urban existence” (Foucault 2007: 336). With the rise of highly populated cities and bustling markets, the police necessarily organize these new forms of social life.

‘To police’, ‘to urbanize’: to police and to urbanize is the same thing (...) Police and commerce, police and urban development, and police and the development of all the activities of the market in the broad sense, constitute an essential unity (...) (T)he market town became the model of state intervention in men’s lives. We think this is the fundamental fact of the seventeenth century, at any rate the fundamental fact characterizing the birth of police in the seventeenth century. (Foucault 2007: 337–338)

Based on this theoretical perspective, scholarly research focused on the urban scale has shown that, in the framework of advanced neoliberalism,⁵ cities have been gradually imagined and reclassified as “engines of the economy which boost growth” (Pact of Amsterdam 2016: 3) and citizens as ‘responsible’ for their own chance (Rose 1999). These aims are to be achieved through boosting both ‘entrepreneurial’ micro-activities and start-up urbanism aimed at creating attractive urban settings exploited by the circuits of global capitalism—for example, through financial incentives or urban branding (Harvey 1989; Rossi 2017) and sharing economy online platforms (Rossi and Di Bella 2017; Stabrowski 2017).

Furthermore, with regard to the governmentality approach, in the past two decades the post-Fordist city, the global city, the cultural city, the creative city and, most recently, the smart city have been questioned as ‘neoliberal’ catchy mottos (see, e.g.: Short and Kim 1999; Raco and Imrie 2000; Cochrane 2007; Vanolo 2014; Ho 2016).

The argument presented here is that, firstly, the governmentality approach may provide a way out of the territorial trap as it invites us to consider territorialization—traversing a pre-given definition of the national, international or global scales—as products of particular governmental rationalities and, on that basis, to come up with alternative frameworks. Thus, this approach reverses the logic that grasps spaces as constitutive of governmentalities. It argues, instead, that governmentalities are constitutive of spatiality (Larner and Walters 2004: 13).

Secondly, by contrast, it is clear that the potential of governmentality as a ‘new explanatory category’ in EU urban policies is problematically deductive. This argument derives propositions from the presumed features of the supranational or the urban scales. However, it was precisely such interpretative logic that Foucault criticized: the way in which state theory inferred the activities of government from the essential characteristics of the state (Foucault 2008: 77). On the contrary, the European Union spatiality is a process, a dynamic and contingent form of societal power relations (Lemke 2011: 57).

⁵According to Brenner and Theodore (2002), the approach of this chapter moves away from the assumption that neoliberalism is an ensemble of coordinates that will produce the same political results and socio-spatial transformations everywhere. On the contrary, as Ong (2007: 3) emphasizes: “Neoliberalism is conceptualized not as a fixed set of attributes with predetermined outcomes, but as a logic of governing that migrates and is selectively taken up in diverse political contexts”.

The investigation around governmentality, specifically in international relations studies, has resulted in conceptual innovations that allow considering both the ‘impurity’ of governmental tools and the fact that neoliberalism governmentality does not always rule through uniformity and standardization. Tikly (2003) has developed the notion of ‘governmentality-in-the-making’ to underline the “complex and often contradictory elements (...) which provide both continuity and discontinuity with what went before” (Tikly 2003: 166). Furthermore, Ong (2007) works with a set of terms that problematize the assumptions of uniformity behind the ways in which the neoliberal governmentality mechanisms are used, stressing neoliberalism as ‘mobile technology’.

It is on the basis of these theoretical interpretations that this contribution proposes Foucault’s writings on governmentality and the various contributions of governmentality scholars provide as analytical tools to deconstruct UA.

1.4 Stretching Governmentality Outside: Thinking About EU Urban Spaces

In order to approach UA as a *dispositif* trans-scalar circulating form of governmentality, it is necessary to start from its definition. It consists of “discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral and philanthropic positions” (Foucault 1980: 184).

At a general level, UA is, by necessity, an all-purpose and multifocal *dispositif*. According to the European Commission (EC 1997), the concept of Urban Agenda was initially developed in order to have a generic term not directly linked to any pre-existing policy framework of the EU member states that was also neutral enough to be used in the context of trans-European policies.

However, UA is not a neutral document. By introducing the Pact of Amsterdam to the UA’s Orientation Papers, it displays implicit normative assumptions about how EU urban space ought to be organized and how EU spatial planning ought to be conducted (see the Sustainable Use of Land and Nature-Based Solutions Orientation Paper). The EU has used the following definitions for Urban Agenda:

The Urban Agenda for the EU is an integrated and coordinated approach to deal with the urban dimension of EU and national policies and legislation. By focusing on concrete priority themes within dedicated Partnerships, the Urban Agenda seeks to improve the quality of life in urban areas. (...) Each Partnership involves on a voluntary and equal basis city, Member States, the Commission and stakeholders such as NGOs or businesses. Together they work on developing and implementing concrete actions to successfully tackle challenges of cities and to contribute to *smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*. (Author’s emphasis, Pact of Amsterdam 2016: 3)

(...) The Urban Agenda for the EU is a coherent set of actions of key European actors. It is a *new form of informal multilevel cooperation* where Member States, Regions, representatives of Urban Authorities, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Union’s Advisory Bodies (CoR, EESC), the EIB and other relevant actors work in partnership. (Author’s emphasis, Pact of Amsterdam 2016: 9)

Each partnership is made up of Urban Authorities, the European Commission, EU organizations (European Investment Bank, European Economic and Social Committee, Committee of Regions), member states, partner states, experts, umbrella organizations (e.g. Eurocities and Council of European Municipalities and Regions), knowledge organizations (e.g. URBACT, ESPON, EUKN) and stakeholders (NGOs, education, research, business) with voluntary involvement.

The UA has been conceptualized within EU discourse as downscaling the framework description above in the UA's Orientation Papers. In fact, EU Urban Agenda discourse could be used by urban managers and political and economic urban elites to support specific urban policies, introducing a neoliberal agenda congruent with the ethos of market rationality. Against the backdrop of the governmentality/neoliberalism nexus, there are many links between neoliberal urban development policies and the UA imaginary: for instance, the construction of a clean, green and smart city image is a useful tool to attract investments.

The initial list of priority themes for the Urban Agenda for the EU, taking into account the priorities of the EU 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, is as follows: (1) inclusion of migrants and refugees; (2) air quality; (3) urban poverty; (4) housing; (5) circular economy; (6) jobs and skills in the local economy; (7) climate adaptation (including green infrastructure solutions); (8) energy transition; (9) sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions; (10) urban mobility; (11) digital transition; and (12) innovative and responsible public procurement.

As the previous quote indicates, the EU's Urban Agenda essentially deals with a spatial selectivity process aimed at governing the urban dimension at a supranational scale through trans-scalar partnerships that, nonetheless, inescapably engage with state territories and national and regional politics. In fact, the connection between the 'urban' and Urban Agenda is open. In the Pact of Amsterdam, the term 'urban areas' is used to denote "all forms and sizes of urban settlement and their citizens, since the precise definition of a 'City' and an 'Urban Area' differs from one Member State to another" (Pact of Amsterdam 2016: 3) and the term 'Urban Authorities' is used "to address the relevant public authorities responsible for the governance of the 'Urban Areas', be it local, regional, metropolitan and/or national authorities" (Pact of Amsterdam 2016: 3).

In UA discourse, common territorial descriptors are sought more from economic 'necessities' rather than conventional territorial characteristics such as culture or identity (Antonsich 2009). Furthermore, UA texts end up producing shared political and economic challenges facing 'Europe' and 'Europeans'.

The UA's Orientation Papers underline: "A good *urban planning* can provide favourable conditions for *economic development*—using local potential and resources (including human, historical, cultural, etc.), *attracting enterprises and skilled people*" (author's emphasis, UA Orientation Paper: Partnership Jobs and Skills 2017: 3) and "Lifelong, digital, learning will become more and more important as people will have more varied careers and will need to keep up, in particular, their digital skills to *remain competitive on the job market*" (author's emphasis, UA Orientation Paper: Partnership for Digital Transition 2017: 6). These are the traces of neoliberal forms of governmentality with the presumption that the nature of an agenda, as an

informal document, involves a certain moderation of state space sovereignty, which emphasizes both the role of cities and managing people as self-entrepreneurs in competitive markets. Sovereignty, as one of the three modalities of power—sovereignty, discipline and government—as discussed by the governmentality literature, “evokes the image of a single source of authority, law and right within a given domain” (Rose 1999: 2).

In fact, many of the proposals and objectives connected to UA illustrate that, given the emphasis on the neoliberal political rationality on the pressures of global market forces, sovereignty in this context often is soft and follows the logic of ‘graduated sovereignty’ at the national level (Ong 2000). It is objectified using the existing law to give rise to economic spaces (e.g. the notion of “Next Economy”, in the UA Orientation Paper: Partnership Jobs and Skills 2017: 5) suited to attract investment, highly skilled experts or smart technology solutions:

Smart cities are the future’s networked activity hubs, playing a key role in the societal and economic development. The *future city is a place/hub/platform*, to which people, companies etc. link their activities and find themselves all they need, be it employers/employees, services, social interaction. (Author’s emphasis, Partnership for Digital Transition Orientation Paper 2017: 5)

Knowledge-based economy, in neoliberal Western urban realities, has become a buzzword (Moisio 2018). Neoliberal thinking is directed towards the promotion of a new self-enterprising ethos in educated and self-managing citizens who can compete in global knowledge markets. The emergence of both a market-driven approach in education and high-tech and scientific/knowledge workers has propelled a global job migration (Mitchell 1999; Gandini 2016) and corporatization of the university:

Education is in most member states a national competence. This doesn’t mean that local authorities lack options to innovate the curricula. These range from creating a dialogue with the national institutions to developing an incentive system to stimulate the education sector to *develop more market driven training programmes*. This involves a stronger focus on practical learning, multidisciplinary approaches, and allowing for experimental learning. (Author’s emphasis, Summary of the Priority Themes (PTs) Orientation Paper: Partnership Jobs and Skills 2017:4)

The UA prescribes ‘political entrepreneurialism’ or a shift from a focus on the production of goods (already underway for decades) to the production of educated and disciplined subjects.

Equally, the concept of refugee, at work in the Orientation Paper ‘Social Affairs Refugee Reception and Integration in Cities’ (2016), demonstrates the persistence of the state system and its particular territorialization of citizenship (Lui 2004). In tracing the emergence of the refugee as a problem and a subject of power, we can recognize the governmentality framework at work in the UA’s Orientation Paper in the constitution of another outsider (as the ill or the insane in Foucault’s analytics). Put simply, urban authorities are mobilized to deal with issues for which they have an inadequate formal role (migrants and refugee inclusion, education policies), intensifying inadequate policy coordination.

Against the background discussion over the need to increase the ‘openness’ of EU spatiality aimed at promoting unrestricted access to borderless ‘flows’, the emphasis

on the importance of opening up spaces occurs in order to enable circulation as characteristically neoliberal (Elden 2007: 30). The *dispositif* of the UA is more specific, in the sense that it reproduces a neoliberal vision of global space, which not only stresses the borderless economic space, but also accentuates connectivity and accessibility with the assumption of the ‘future city as place/hub/platform’. Accordingly, it gives primary importance to networks and connections among selected urban areas and identifies an unstable pattern shaped by a direct interaction between EU and situated political regimes (Urban Authorities). Policy arenas are not already defined by formal political entities, but by the geometry configured on a case-by-case basis through the intersection of EU institutions and urban authorities. The UA’s effectiveness, as a disciplinary strategy of the EU, stems from two main features that characterize the UA.

The first feature is the all-encompassing scope of the UA. This ‘meta-governance’ characteristic refers not only to the agenda as a cross-sectoral and cross-boundary policy capable of dealing with a wide range of urban matters, from land-use regulation to refugee crisis, but also to its capacity to produce territories as ‘effects’. In European country members, however, authority is dispersed and often informal, deriving from standard professional positions and specific kinds of ‘spatial expertise’ (Kuus 2011) rather than from political mandate only. The chain of command and control is not traceable to the formal structures of policy-making but ‘hidden’ in the complex networks of actors from diverse institutional contexts.⁶

The business model approach pays specific attention to new types of digital business opportunities arising from the urban context. *Business models are tools to realize and implement urban digital transition* through key enabling technologies and supportive data governance. Business models can foster innovation ecosystems that rely on public-private-people partnerships, value co-creation and ecosystemic value potential. (Author’s emphasis, Partnership for Digital Transition Orientation Paper 2017: 18)

Yet it is not the acquisition of formal or high-level political status that makes UA a significant spatializing practice, in fact quite the opposite. What makes it powerful is its comprehensiveness and its status as a seemingly non-political, evidence-based framework which could enable policymakers to justify their aims as inevitable requirements for the common good.

The second feature that makes UA a governmentality *dispositif* is the heavy support within UA contents on calculative techniques such as land-use management, economic analysis and smart technologies, confirming the role of scientific knowledge. They mesh especially well with the current dominant neoliberal ideology of space, which has given rise to the relational ontology of continental space and an openly ‘economistic’ bias for agendas at different scales (e.g. see Caprotti et al. 2017

⁶The Pact of Amsterdam underlines that the Urban Agenda for the EU will, in addition to the organizations mentioned in the Pact, make use of existing European policies, instruments, platforms and programmes such as the opportunities offered by Cohesion Policy, including its sustainable urban development strand, Urban Innovative Actions, URBACT, ESPON, the ‘Covenant of Mayors’, CIVITAS 2020, Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities (RFSC) and EUKN. It will make full use of the European Innovation Partnership ‘Smart Cities and Communities’ as established by the Commission.

on the New Urban Agenda). In the UA, networked practices, economic challenges and ‘functional’ foundations essentially form the main rationales in the organization of continental space. The result is the assumption that UA is a ‘good thing’, devoid of any explicit, political and biased interests.

Despite the voluntary basis and the variety of actors and institutions involved in UA, there are certain commonly shared spatial ideas and assumptions as to how European space and spatial relations ought to be regulated as well as by what means and to what extent. First, the widest unanimity concerns the ontological existence of the EU space itself. The territory of the EU is represented as a singular entity composed of diverse regions, each with their own particular role within the whole. A second widely shared presumption is that the existing European territories explain part of the so-called EU competitiveness problem (Moisio 2011: 21). In other words, from a city-centric approach, EU economic problems are considered as urban problems. The third presupposition, consequential to the first two, is that this ensemble can be better regulated and organized through the UA.

In UA texts, a Euclidean understanding of space is equated with old-fashioned territorial readings of space and spatial relations. The relational view is considered innovative and a more suitable approach to spatial policies and planning in the light of contemporary global challenges. Consequently, UA promotes networks as overriding forms of the spatial organization of its working partnerships. In parallel, the concept of polycentrism is used in UA to describe—though it actually determines—the hierarchies of European cities involved in UA.

1.5 Conclusion: Will Cities Rescue the EU?

This chapter has considered the outlines of the Urban Agenda for the European Union as a distinctive field of investigation in the research framework of Urban Agendas. The UA is a key step forward for rethinking European spaces as the EU can no longer simply be viewed as a Europe of nation states or an assumed supra-state. The UA framework displays an informal networked space of Europeanization that sustains the idea of ‘Europe’ and enables its articulation in terms of common ‘European urban policy’ or ‘EU urban areas’. Within that field, EU policymakers, urban authorities and national actors produce, share and transfer visions of a governable European space. In doing so, they maintain the idea of ‘Europe’ as a spatial entity, establishing it “as a governable object” (Barry 1993: 3199) through the strengthened role of cities and, furthermore, by contributing significantly to the legitimation of the urban over state territoriality. This condition has been prompted by a context of national austerity politics and public sector reduction of expenditure (Deas and Hincks 2017).

The chapter begs the question of the interpretation of UA as a governmentality tool. It considers it as a *dispositif* of power requiring the production and circulation of knowledge and rationalities suited to the management of new urban spatialities and projects at the EU scale. Far from being a technique of coercion and domination, the UA represents a differing modality of power that attempts to discursively legitimize

external interventions through the imposition of neoliberal economic agenda. The UA heralds urban areas as the protagonists of social, smart and sustainable development, the promotion of new multi-level partnerships and the empowerment of local communities and citizens. These aspects all underline, in the wake of the urban age discourse and of the urban sovereignty (Barber 2017), an attempt to reinforce the role of cities in supporting EU projects, facing the return of nationalist policies and the consensus of Eurosceptic parties in many member states (Mamadouh 2018).

However, it is helpful to point out that there are two risks inherent in this process. The first—against the background of an agenda on a voluntary basis—is that specific objectives, strategies, ideologies and political choices may be presented as ‘natural’ and ‘neutral’ approaches. Nevertheless, UA tends to privilege a city-centric perspective that will trigger a spatial restructuring, deterritorialization and reterritorialization which in turn will produce new urban spaces and subjects that are either included or neglected (Jones 1999). The second risk is that territories and cities are also conceptualized in less absolute and bounded terms than previously, accentuating the lack of the regional scale. In UA documents, ‘EU territory and cities’ emerge as practices or acts rather than physical spaces. Additionally, within UA texts, territoriality has been re-scaled so that not only strictly bounded but also fluid, networked and porous ‘soft’ spaces exist as well. Overall, territories are articulated in UA not only through their legal or constitutional basis but also through ideas related to the understanding of territories as networked, de-politicized spaces of political-economic belonging. According to the viewpoint developed by Wilson and Swyngedouw (2014), under the label of UA, urban issues run the risk of shifting more towards the field of post-politics without proper critical discussions and without ‘politics’. There is an increasing emphasis on searching for the ‘functional’ foundations of European cities—e.g. in the Pact of Amsterdam (2016: 7): “Urban Authorities therefore need to cooperate within their functional areas and with their surrounding regions, connecting and reinforcing territorial and urban policies”—demonstrates that experimentation and indeterminacy in our understandings of what we mean by a city do not fit in a structure of enduring injustice and inequality. Consequently, governance and redistribution require explicit politics (Beauregard 2018).

At the same time, the diffusion of populism, anti-system and Eurosceptic parties challenge the present and future of EU structure and policy integration. Borders, globalization, inequalities and sovereignty are crucial variables in the current populist wave. Against this backdrop, the role of borders looks particularly important. Indeed, (territorial and relational) borders are crucial sites in understanding processes of EU integration. Therefore, borders and bordering processes at diverse scales are pivotal to exploring and understanding the rationale and the implications of the current shifting political setting of the EU, and the forthcoming, potential mechanisms of UA integration or disruption. Moreover, borders are central in populist discourse and ideology, not only as ‘containers’ of national identity, but as crucial markers of sovereignty against both urban narrative and supranational regulations.

In order to deal with those risks and issues, crucial further research and critical debates about the urban issue in EU urban policy are necessary. There is consequently a need for further studies regarding the spatialities and scales engendered by UA,

the new geometries of power produced by UA strategies, the role played by different fields of knowledge in shaping the city of the future and, lastly, the need to bring the UA into the political arena.

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Chapter 2

Understanding the Emergence of the Spanish Urban Agenda: Moving Towards a New Multi-level Urban Policy Scenario?



Sonia De Gregorio Hurtado and Moneyba González Medina

Abstract The urban question has attracted the attention of decision-makers in the last years. As a result, several stakeholders and government levels are launching the development of their urban agendas, a trend that can be observed particularly in some EU member states. In this context, Spain emerges as an interesting case since it has just approved its national urban agenda: the Spanish Urban Agenda (SUA). This is the first time that the country has adopted a national framework for urban policies. One of the reasons for this is the formal sharing of competences between the different territorial levels, in which the national, regional and local governments have not yet developed effective mechanisms for working collaboratively in the urban development policy field. The distribution of power has evolved into a fragmented urban policy scenario. In this context, the multi-level governance (MLG) issue becomes a relevant aspect that needs to be addressed by the SUA in order to become a real transformative instrument. This chapter develops an analytical framework aimed at assessing to what extent the SUA has made relevant progress in this regard. The results show that even if the institutional setting remains the same, the SUA tries to overcome the so-called MLG gaps introducing a MLG approach. The SUA does not only consider the limitations of the political context, but also introduces a series of mechanisms that reinforce, on the one hand, the relationship between the national and the local levels and, on the other, its orientation to implementation.

Keywords Spanish Urban Agenda · Multi-level governance · Urban Europeanization · Urban development policy

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2.1 Introduction

In the last years, urban issues have gained visibility in the international policy stage. In this context, two important supranational Urban Agendas have been launched: the New Urban Agenda of United Nations (United Nations 2016), along with the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations 2015), and the Urban Agenda for the European Union (Pact of Amsterdam 2016). On the one hand, both arise as drivers that call for policy attention for cities and urban issues in decision-making at many scales, and on the other hand, they lead to the definition of national agendas and policies in many countries, in some cases for the first time. The growing attention on the urban issue proves once again the relevance that cities have as strategic poles from which economic and social development policies can be carried out at supranational, national, regional and local level (González Medina et al. 2018). Policy frameworks and practices determine and are incorporated into the priorities and mechanisms of the agendas, resulting in different approaches under a sort of “common umbrella”.

In the context of the European Union, Spain belongs to the group of member states that have developed their Urban Agenda. The commitment was formalized in 2014, in the framework of the negotiations with the European Commission for the 2014–2020 programming period of the Cohesion Policy. It is relevant to highlight that the intention to advance towards an Urban Agenda for the country was not born from an internal decision process involving all the relevant tiers of government, but rather from a negotiation between the Spanish government and the European Commission regarding the distribution of the European Structural and Investment Funds for urban development.

The capacity of the international stakeholders to strongly influence Spanish urban policies throughout the last decades has been identified as a phenomenon (González Medina et al. 2017; De Gregorio Hurtado 2017, 2018). This capacity can be explained through the concept of the “two-level games” (Putnam 1988) in which actors try “to overcome obstacles at their own governance level by making strategic use of the negotiation processes at another level” (Ehnert et al. 2018: 104). Ehnert et al. argue that this is the case of, for example, domestic actors referring to agreements in international negotiations (such as the Sustainable Development Goals) “to overcome domestic resistance to sustainability” (ibid.). This example mirrors the Spanish case and brings the multi-level governance issue to the forefront of the agenda.

The decision to develop the Spanish Urban Agenda (SUA) constitutes a relevant policy milestone, considering the lack of an explicit urban policy at a national scale (Parkinson et al. 2013). The explanation for this undertaking is complex and is based on different factors, rooted in the inherited urban tradition and developed in accordance with the institutional architecture set by the Spanish Constitution in 1978 (De Gregorio Hurtado 2014). The Constitution devolved previously centralized competences on urban matters to the regions and the municipalities, maintaining few areas of state jurisdiction. This distribution of power has evolved into a fragmented urban policy scenario (Romero 2005) caused by a devolution process that many consider

unfinished at the local level. The regional, the municipal and the national levels are defensive of their respective urban competences and do not behave collaboratively.

Multi-level governance (MLG) is therefore extremely relevant to “urban development” policy, a field of public action in which many competences are shared or concurrent. The more complex the issue, the more policy integration is needed, both in terms of inclusion and coherence, and collaboration and coordination. In addition, in an era in which “there is no longer a single sovereign authority”, but “a multiplicity of actors specific to each policy area (...)” (Rhodes 1996: 658), serious problems of coordination and efficiency in the design and implementation of policies are common. This is a critical point in several Spanish policy fields (Romero 2005; Romero and Farinós 2004; SUA 2019). Despite this, the institutional architecture has not been reinforced over time with mechanisms that promote integrated policy action. The approach adopted by the institutional actors in this regard explains to a certain extent the traditional lack of a “common vision” for national urban policy. The scenario is also characterized by a low capacity for involving private stakeholders and the local communities in urban policies (De Gregorio Hurtado 2012).

The EU promotes MLG and a policy integration approach (Meijers and Stead 2004) when addressing urban issues. On the one hand, MLG presupposes the existence of mutual loyalty and interests between the institutions and the various levels of government in reaching common goals. It involves a vertical dimension, which presumes good coordination and cooperation between the different tiers of government, and a horizontal dimension, which imposes a coherent implementation of sectoral policies to ensure sustainable development and synergy with the other relevant policies (Committee of the Regions¹ 2009). On the other, the MLG also emphasizes the interconnection of multiple arenas in policy-making. In this process, public actors have to cooperate with private stakeholders in order to address collective demands efficiently (Wiener and Diez 2003: 103–104). Governance is thus “multi-level” in the sense of bringing together actors from different tiers of government (EU, national and subnational), policy sectors (i.e. mobility, climate change, energy transition, urban poverty, etc.) and spheres (public–private) (Bernard 2002). MLG shifts away from the bureaucratic paradigm towards a problem-solving approach (Scharpf 1997) in which the adoption of a collaborative approach allows to overcome fragmentation of competences and visions.

The SUA emerges as potential instrument to transition to an MLG governance policy scenario, providing mechanisms for coordination and collaboration among relevant stakeholders. It is also a framework able to provide a common understanding of sustainable urban development in the country for all the government levels and other stakeholders. This is crucial in a moment in which different Spanish regions are also preparing their own urban agendas (e.g. Andalusia finished and approved in 2018, Basque Country, Catalonia), and many cities are transforming their former

¹The CoR recommends reinforcing the partnership practice, both vertically between different levels of government (local, regional, national and EU) and horizontally between institutional and non-institutional actors (civil society, particularly in the context of social dialogue). MLG also ensures the implementation of the five principles underpinning good governance, namely: openness, participation, responsibility, effectiveness and coherence (White Paper on European Governance, 2001).

Table 2.1 Definition of the multi-level governance “gaps”

MLG gaps	Definition
Information	Different levels do not have the same quantity or quality of information when designing, implementing and delivering public policy
Capacity	Lack of human, knowledge (skill-based and ‘know-how’) or infrastructural resources available to carry out tasks, regardless of the level of government
Fiscal/funding	Revenues are not sufficient to finance the required expenditures, indicating a direct dependence on ‘higher’ levels of government
Administrative	Administrative borders do not correspond to functional, economic and social areas, leading to a fragmentation of public policies
Policy	Ministries take purely vertical approaches to cross-sectorial policies that require co-design or joint implementation at the local level

Source Own elaboration, based on Van der Brande (2014)

Local Agendas 21 in their Urban Agenda 2030. Our hypothesis is that the mere consideration of MLG as an objective in the instrument would not be enough to overcome the “MLG gaps” (Van der Brande 2014: 10) in the Spanish framework. This chapter explores this hypothesis in the context of the SUA, paying attention to the “most common obstacles to effective MLG” (see Table 2.1) and the mechanisms embedded in the SUA, both in terms of content and process.

The genealogy and the content of the SUA are addressed from this analytical perspective, using a mixed qualitative methodology based on document analysis (primary sources and literature). When the review of documents has not permitted finding the required information, relevant stakeholders have been consulted via email or have been interviewed (see acknowledgements). The authors have also taken part in the process of participation of the SUA. They have applied a direct observation technique during the meetings and events attended² which has also contributed to this research. The collected data provide an in-depth understanding of the SUA and its potential to advance towards an MLG urban policy scenario.

The chapter is structured as follows: Sect. 2.2 introduces the conceptual and the analytical framework for assessing MLG; Sect. 2.3 constructs and analyses the

²The process has involved attending different kinds of events related to the process of development of the agenda and specific meetings with the Ministry of Public Works during the participation phase. The events attended are the following: (1) Seminar “Shaping the Spanish Urban Agenda in light of other European national urban policy frameworks”, organized by the Ministry of Public Works and EUKN, 30 November 2017; (2) Presentation of the SUA to the public in the Ministry of Public Works, 25 April 2018; (3) Meeting with Directors General and public servants of the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Finance and Public Function, 20 June 2018; (4) Meeting with the DG of Land and Urban Policies (Ministry of Public Works) in the framework of the participation process of SUA with representatives of the Academia, 16 July 2018; (5) Presentation “of La movilidad en la Agenda Urbana del Ministerio de Fomento” in the National Congress CONAMA on 28 November 2018; (6) Presentation of the SUA in the National Congress CIOT in Santander on the 14 March 2019; and (7) Presentation of the SUA in the Faculty of Architecture of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid on 12 March 2019.

process of development of the Spanish Urban Agenda; Sect. 2.4 analyses and discusses the instrument in the light of the analytical framework; Sect. 2.5 provides the conclusion.

2.2 Conceptual Framework: Addressing the Multi-level Governance (MLG) Gaps

Multi-level governance (MLG) (Hooghe and Marks 2001) emerged as a way to understand the relationship between the domestic and supranational levels of authority. At the EU level, this relationship was the result of three main factors: (i) the reform of the Structural Funds in 1988, which put a greater emphasis on partnership and coordination; (ii) the mobilization and proliferation of interest groups within policy networks in the context of the single market; and (iii) the principle of “subsidiarity” (Treaty of Maastricht 1992) which expressed the desirability of policy action at the lowest possible level (Stephenson 2013: 817).

MLG has been also extended to other relation dynamics within national frameworks, especially in decentralized countries. As Stephenson states, “MLG has been used to try to provide a simplified notion of what is pluralistic and highly dispersed policy-making activity, where multiple actors (individuals and institutions) participate, at various political levels, from the supranational to the sub-national or local. It implies spatial distinctions and geographical separation but, at the same time, its most vital feature is the linkages that connect levels” (2013: 817).

However, MLG usually collides with the reality of “blurring of jurisdictions, dysfunctional coordination, overlapping functions, excess of regulations, no traditions of cooperating” (CORA 2013: 87). In practice, actors do not usually behave in a coordinated and collaborative way, unless specific integration mechanisms have been foreseen in order to overcome that reality. According to Van der Brande (den Brande 2014), the underpinning factors that hinder MLG are the so-called MLG gaps, which are related to the following aspects: (a) information, (b) capacity, (c) fiscal/funding, (d) administration and (e) policy. Other authors state that MLG only works in non-competitive issues (Van der Heiden 2010: 14) or if there is mutual loyalty between intervening levels (Committee of the Regions 2009).

The aforementioned gaps emerge clearly on the Spanish stage (see Appendix 1). The report on “Effectiveness of Public Action in the Autonomic State: Diagnosis and Improvement Proposals” (*La eficacia de la acción pública en el Estado Autonómico: diagnóstico y propuestas de mejora*) (AEVAL 2011) highlights a series of critical points regarding the decentralized institutional setting of the country. In particular, it mentions the lack of integral planning processes which can hinder the coherence and complementarity of policies; the absence of participatory, common or cooperative procedures at an administrative and political level; the lack of information systems enabling citizens to be aware of and compare the effectiveness and efficiency of the different policies and public services (a necessary element to achieve transparency

and to produce accountable policies); the lack of information or methodology that encumbers cost and impacts analysis (policy funding); the lack of sufficient information systems to manage public policy, complications for inter-operability of the different applications designed by the regional governments; or lack of data update or deficient data entry (CORA 2013: 88).

The Spanish Urban Agenda (SUA) takes into account this problematic scenario and pays attention to the issue of MLG governance. In particular, the Strategic Objective 10 is aimed to improve the instruments of intervention and the governance, and explicitly the MLG. Through its Action Plan, the SUA intervenes in several governance issues such as: (good) regulations, (adequate) planning system, (enough) funding for the actions to be developed, (effective) governance and (real) citizen participation, as well as dissemination and transmission channels of knowledge (SUA 2019: 160). Therefore, it can be expected that if the Urban Agenda includes specific mechanisms that address these “MLG gaps”, the policy could be deployed to its full potential.

The following analytical framework (Table 2.2) will be applied to identify and assess the MLG instruments and mechanisms embedded in the SUA. This kind of analysis is relevant in order to assess its potential to be successful, especially when the SUA is a political “action blueprint” (or a soft policy) rather than a legal instrument, and the normative framework remains the same (e.g. the sharing of competences).

This assessment will be carried out considering three dimensions, namely: the “policy stage”, the “pillars of policy process” and the “type of interaction between/within levels”, based on the number of mentions made to MLG, both as a principle or a gap (see Table 2.2). In particular, the “policy stage” is referred to the different phases in which the MLG has been mentioned as part of a strategic objective (design), an action (implementation) or an indicator (evaluation). The “pillars of policy process” are those promoted by the Urban Agenda for the EU (Pact of Amsterdam 2016). They are principles that help to achieve the desirable policy goals, through better regulation, better funding and better knowledge, as well as participation and partnership. The last dimension is the “type of interaction”, and this refers to the levels that interact: vertical (urban, regional, national, UE/international) and/or horizontal (citizens, associations, private sector, etc.). For example, in the case of the promotion of multilateral meetings between national level and regional level at least twice a year, the type of interaction is vertical.

2.3 The Spanish Urban Agenda: Genealogy and Content

2.3.1 The Genealogy of the Spanish Urban Agenda

The origin of the Spanish Urban Agenda (SUA) can be placed in the framework of the negotiations between the European Commission (Directorate General of Regional and Urban Policy—DG REGIO) and the Spanish government (Ministry of Finance)

for the allocation of the Structural Funds 2014–2020. The DG of European Funds of the Ministry of Finance had been engaged in several urban initiatives such as the URBAN Community Initiative I and II and the *Iniciativa Urbana* (this programme established the continuation of URBAN under the Cohesion Policy during the 2007–2013 period in the country). The commitment between the DG REGIO and the Spanish government towards the agenda was formalized in the Partnership Agreement of Spain 2014–2020 (Ministerio de Hacienda y Administraciones Públicas 2014: 222). After its signature, the DG of European Funds led the process for the development of the SUA. It is worth mentioning that the Ministry of Public Works (Ministerio de Fomento), the institution with jurisdiction on urban issues, did not participate in these first steps.

The DG of European Funds (Ministry of Finance and Public Administration) immediately created a Task Group to start the process. It was integrated by stakeholders with different profiles (decision-makers, practitioners, academics, public servants). Many of them had participated in the implementation of the *Iniciativa Urbana* and were representatives of the cities that had excelled in that framework. This group had strong links with the *Red de Iniciativas Urbanas* (Network for Urban Initiatives) that gathers the work of Spanish cities and other actors around the urban dimension of EU policy. The Task Group met only two times during 2015. After that, the SUA process remained blocked. The DG of European Funds had real intention and interest in continuing it, but at that moment, it did not have the capacity in terms of human resources (interview 1—see acknowledgements). Despite the formal negotiation, in praxis the agenda was not a real priority for the national government.

In the meantime, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations became an increasingly important element as a new urban policy reference framework. They can be pointed out as the most influential urban policy elements in the Spanish framework from 2016 onwards. This influence distinctly characterizes the Spanish case if compared with other member states of the EU. It could be hypothesized that the lack of a national urban policy and the previous work on urban development in the frame of the Structural Funds have made the country particularly receptive to the United Nations approach to urban issues. The same can be observed with regard to the urban policy of the EU that from the end of the 1980s has strongly influenced the Spanish national scenario (De Gregorio Hurtado 2012, 2017, 2018). The country is very “sensitive” to external policy inputs. From 2017, the Agenda 2030 started to impact the process of definition of the Spanish Urban Agenda.

At that time, a crucial fact led to a significative momentum for the development of the SUA: In November 2016, Íñigo de la Serna, Mayor of Santander, was appointed Minister of Public Works. Probably because of his “urban background”, the new Minister understood the potential of the SUA to guide local political agendas, something never achieved before, even if there had been some attempts (De Gregorio Hurtado 2014; De Gregorio Hurtado and González Medina 2017). This circumstance together with the approval of the *New Urban Agenda* (United Nations 2016) and the *Urban Agenda for the European Union* (Pact of Amsterdam 2016) opened a “policy win-

dow” (Kingdon 1984; Gelli 2014) that placed the SUA among the priorities of the Ministry.

The first consequence of this was that the Ministry of Public Works “recovered” the responsibility of the development of the agenda, taking it from the Ministry of Finance. This resulted in a change of leadership and the relaunching of the process. In June 2017, a completely new Task Group (TG), composed of experts in charge of developing the first draft, was created. It was integrated by seven males with a recognized background in different urban issues. Afterwards, the group grew to ten members (Ministerio de Fomento 2019a), integrating one woman and expanding the thematic expertise. The experts had an important background on sectoral urban topics (especially in architecture, environment and engineering), but the group did not have specific experience on the design of strategic policy instruments. This expertise was provided by the technicians of the Ministry (Deputy Directorate of Urban Planning and Deputy Directorate of Land Policy). As a result, the instrument was highly institutionally determined regarding this important dimension. Because of the composition of the TG, it can be pointed out that its work was biased from this perspective (Fig. 2.1).

The Ministry defined the agenda as a non-binding “strategic framework to guide the sustainable urban policies in the country, with social, environmental and economic objectives” (Ministry of Public Works 2018a: 9). This fact is highly significant and very much related to the MLG and competence issues mentioned above. The guiding principle of the SUA is the sustainable territorial and urban development encoded in the Land Law of 2015 (Texto Refundido de la Ley de Suelo y Rehabilitación



Fig. 2.1 Constitutive meeting of the TG in June 2018. Reproduced from the webpage of the Ministerio de Fomento

Urbana de 30 de octubre de 2015) (Ministerio de Fomento 2017:2). The idea was to develop a strategic instrument, not a regulatory one, aimed at improving some thematic priorities, the regulation, territorial and urban planning, the funding of urban policies, the knowledge and the exchange of good practices, and the governance, in the wider framework and aligned with international agendas (ibid.). From the beginning, the Ministry had in mind an Urban Agenda based on the implementation of “soft” policy instruments. This would allow to deliver actions in a policy field in which national competence is very restricted, as mentioned above. The possibility of delivering little change was preferable to the risk of complaint from subnational government levels, particularly the Autonomous Communities.

The development of the SUA at that moment was based on a top-down approach in which cities, regions, and other crucial stakeholders were not integrated or consulted at the beginning. It is worth noting that the *Red the Iniciativas Urbanas*, a highly specialized grass-roots network centred on urban issues (because of its composition), was not integrated in the process. The Ministry maintained the control on the SUA, stating that other task groups would be created: one TG to “guarantee the integration of the vision of the municipalities and the regions”, and an interdepartmental TG to integrate sectoral aspects “that transversally affect urban policies” (Ministerio de Fomento 2017: 1). Additional TGs, created when the development of the document required them, were also proposed (ibid.). In the end, the first draft of the agenda was based mainly on the valuable work of the experts and the relevant complementary tasks developed by the public servants of the Ministry. Even if some public actors working in the urban domain knew that the agenda was in progress, they did not express their concern about not being integrated at this initial stage. For example, from a MLG vision it is worth noting that the regions did not ask to take part in the definition of the SUA. Moreover, the development of the agenda was not disseminated to a relevant extent. The Ministry released a press statement only on the occasion of the first meeting of the experts (Ministerio de Fomento 2017) that had limited media repercussion, even though the event was chaired by the Minister.

The work of the experts was developed from June 2017 to March 2018. The draft (the so-called version zero), produced in collaboration with the technicians and public servants of the Ministry, was then opened to the participation of other groups. The version zero was presented to the Autonomous Communities in March 2018 in the framework of the Sectoral Conference on Housing, Urban Planning and Land (that gathers the Ministry of Public Works with the Director General of the regions). On 30 May, a second conference took place in order to analyse the progress of the agenda. The Ministry requested information from all the regions, but only five sent comments and suggestions (Ministerio de Fomento 2019b: 277).

In the meantime, Spain had started to elaborate its own Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, aligned with that of the United Nations. The SUA was then framed in that wider context, as a relevant element to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This idea was reinforced from June 2018 onwards, as a result of the change of party in the national government. The new government (the socialist party) underlined and gave further relevance to the Spanish Agenda 2030 as well as to the SUA,

understood as a lever policy to achieve the objectives of the first and the SDGs at an urban level.

This new momentum and interest coincided with the beginning of the participation process of the agenda. As a first consequence, the first deadline of the participative process (set in July 2018) was postponed, guaranteeing a more solid dialogue between the Ministry and all the actors willing to make a contribution. The Ministry had meetings with the stakeholders that showed an interest, and specific task groups were created (Ministerio de Fomento 2019a). The participation process lasted until September 2018. A reviewed version was presented in the National Congress on Environment (CONAMA) at the end of November as Spanish Urban Agenda 1.0 (version of October 2018) (Ministry of Public Works 2018b). In the end, the SUA was finally presented in the Council of Ministers at the end of February 2019. This fact was extensively disseminated by the media, and a specific webpage for the agenda was created and launched, and embedded in the webpage of the Ministry of Public Works (<http://www.aue.gob.es/>), providing relevant content and information about the SUA.

The webpage contains a wide range of content that includes a diagnosis, the description of the strategic, territorial and urban framework adopted, the definitive text of the agenda, different documents and texts describing its development and aims, and a proposal of indicators for monitoring and evaluation. It also integrates the link to the other agendas used as a reference, and a document that relates the contents of the instrument to the SDGs and their related targets, the partnerships of the Urban Agenda for the EU and the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations, among other instruments. The documents mentioned above demonstrate that this initiative was inspired and determined by its international counterparts.

The authors of this chapter have been involved in the process of participation and have followed the evolution of the document closely, which has allowed understanding that the last version has evolved significantly from the first draft. Many of the proposals made by the different actors have been taken into account and integrated.

2.3.2 The Characterization of the Agenda: Not a Transformative Instrument, but a Framework for Action

The agenda has been defined by the Ministry as a:

strategic document, without normative character, and of voluntary adhesion, which in accordance with the criteria established by the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations and the Urban Agenda for the European Union pursues the achievement of sustainability in urban development policies. It also constitutes a working method and a process for all actors, public and private, that intervene in cities and that seek an equitable, fair and sustainable development from their different fields of action. (<http://www.aue.gob.es/>)

Following the development of a diagnosis of the Spanish scenario, the SUA sets ten strategic objectives in which cities can act to advance towards more sustainable futures. They are the following (Ministry of Public Works 2018b):

- O.E.1. Rationalize the use of land, and conserve and protect it.
- O.E.2. Avoid urban sprawl and revitalize the existing city.
- O.E.3. Prevent and reduce the effects of climate change.
- O.E.4. Manage resources sustainably and strengthen the circular economy.
- O.E.5. Foster proximity and sustainable mobility.
- O.E.6. Boost and strengthen social cohesion and equity.
- O.E.7. Boost and foster the urban economy.
- O.E.8. Guarantee access to housing.
- O.E.9. Lead and foster digital innovation.
- O.E.10 Improve the instruments of intervention and the governance.**

This study will be focused on O.E.10 since it is specifically aimed at promoting governance and contains several principles and instruments to foster multi-level coordination and collaboration. It includes the following sub-objectives (specific objectives):

- 10.1 To achieve an updated, flexible and simplified regulatory and planning framework and updated plan, which also improves management.
- 10.2. To ensure citizen participation and transparency and **to promote multi-level governance.**
- 10.3. To boost local capacity-building and improve funding.
- 10.4. To design and activate training campaigns and awareness in urban issues and the exchange and dissemination of information.

The sub-objective 10.2 is particularly aimed at fostering MLG, something that is clearly aligned with the Urban Agenda for the EU and the agendas of United Nations.

The SUA does not deliver change or progress in the institutional setting and urban politics. However, it does adopt a strategic approach to support the SDGs. Even if the *status quo* is not questioned, probably because of the balance of power between the different tiers of government (the Autonomous Communities in particular), the agenda fosters structures for coordination, collaboration and cooperation on different levels. Nevertheless, this action that could be transformative is mainly interpreted in terms of territorial planning (Ministerio de Fomento 2019b: 263).

Besides, it is worth underlining that the process is integrating some transformative aspects. One of the most important is the series of seminars that the Ministry is giving in collaboration with the *Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias—FEMP* (Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces), an entity that represents Spanish cities, to disseminate the agenda among local actors. This notable action is unprecedented in Spain. Another is the attention paid to the implementation phase of the agenda and to governance issues. The SUA is accompanied by a specific Action Plan for the National Administration that is focused on several critical aspects related to governance, such as: regulation, planning, participation, funding and knowledge.

Last but not least, the agenda provides resources to local authorities (data, capacity-building, etc.) to help them create their own agendas themselves, without depending on consulting firms, in line with supralocal “Urban” Agendas.

2.3.3 The Mechanisms for the Implementation of the Agenda

The SUA is specifically oriented to implementation. It already describes the Action Plan for the National Administration (NAAP) and contains another implementation mechanism, the “Action Plan” (AP) to be elaborated by cities and other actors interested to engage with the SUA. The intention is that in the 2021–27 period the Action Plans shall be linked to the EU Structural Funding (Baiget 2018; information arising from the meetings attended). The intended lifespan of the APs will be approximately from 2021 until 2030 in order to align their implementation phase with the deadlines of the Agenda 2030 and the programming period of the EU Cohesion Policy.

The Ministry has carried out vital work in support of cities in the elaboration of their agendas (AP) through a series of resources contained in the SUA website, but also through the involvement of several entities like the FEMP or the National and Regional Schools of Public Administration. The support consists in “guiding” and information instruments for the preparation of the urban analysis and diagnosis, as well as “capacity-building”. A relevant effort has been made to provide cities (small ones in particular) information to perform their diagnosis building on existing data gathering and data provision established by different national entities over time (e.g. cities can ask the Ministry of Works to provide them with official statistical data regarding their territory to elaborate the AP through the SUA website).

The agenda also proposes a system of indicators to make the monitoring of the action undertaken by cities (SUA 2019: 168).

2.4 Analysis of the Spanish Urban Agenda from a MLG Perspective

The assessment of the SUA from an MLG perspective has been carried out according to an analytical framework (see Table 2.2) based on three dimensions: “policy stage”, “pillars of policy process” and type of “interaction between/within levels”. The aim is to identify the specific MLG instruments/mechanisms embedded in the SUA. The underlying hypothesis is that even if there is a clear intention of strengthening the MLG in the SUA, the mere consideration of MLG as an objective is not enough to overcome the “MLG gaps” that hinder policy success (especially when no major changes are introduced at an institutional level). Relevant action is thus required to deliver change through specific MLG instruments or mechanisms.

Table 2.2 Matrix to analyse an urban agenda from an MLG perspective

Does the Urban Agenda consider MLG at objective and/or action level? <i>If YES, proceed with the analysis</i>	Does the Urban Agenda establish a specific instrument/mechanism to promote MLG or to address the “MLG gaps”? Indicator = number of mentions	Has it been mentioned in the policy document?	To which governance issue is related?	Does it consider the interaction between/within levels?
Information	<p><i>Description of the type of instrument/mechanism</i></p> <p>Information system with reliable data for evidence-based urban policy-making, as well as for providing tailor-made solutions to major challenges. The different levels should have the same quantity or quality of information (shareable and comparable data) <u>Example of instruments:</u> database, information units, monitoring/evaluation procedures, etc.</p>	<p><i>Policy stage</i></p> <p>Design: Objectives (strategic-specific) Implementation: Action (lines, plan) Evaluation: Indicators</p>	<p><i>Pillars of policy process</i></p> <p>Better regulation and planning (rules, norms, structures, etc.) Better funding Better knowledge Partnership</p>	<p><i>Type of interaction</i></p> <p>Vertical Urban Regional National UE/international Horizontal Citizens Associations Private sector Inter-sectoral (intra-administrative) Between the same territorial levels (e.g. between municipalities)</p>

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

Does the Urban Agenda consider MLG at objective and/or action level? <i>If YES, proceed with the analysis</i>	Does the Urban Agenda establish a specific instrument/mechanism to promote MLG or to address the “MLG gaps”? Indicator = number of mentions	Has it been mentioned in the policy document?	To which governance issue is related?	Does it consider the interaction between/within levels?
Capacity	<p><i>Description of the type of instrument/mechanism</i></p> <p>Human, knowledge (skill-based and “know-how”) or infrastructural resources available to carry out tasks related to urban development and management, regardless of the level of government</p> <p>Example of instruments: “urban” units, capacity-building programmes (courses and training campaigns), exchange of knowledge (good practices and networking), etc.</p>	<i>Policy stage</i>	<i>Pillars of policy process</i>	<i>Type of interaction</i>

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

Does the Urban Agenda consider MLG at objective and/or action level? <i>If YES, proceed with the analysis</i>	Does the Urban Agenda establish a specific instrument/mechanism to promote MLG or to address the “MLG gaps”? Indicator = number of mentions	Has it been mentioned in the policy document?	To which governance issue is related?	Does it consider the interaction between/within levels?
Fiscal/funding	<p><i>Description of the type of instrument/mechanism</i></p> <p>Funding sources linked to the Urban Agenda objectives, based on identifying, complementing and integrating sources at different levels (public and private). These sources must be sufficient and based on urban needs Example of instruments: participatory budgeting, crowdfunding, cost-benefit analysis, etc.</p>		<i>Pillars of policy process</i>	<i>Type of interaction</i>

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

Does the Urban Agenda consider MLG at objective and/or action level? <i>If YES, proceed with the analysis</i>	Does the Urban Agenda establish a specific instrument/mechanism to promote MLG or to address the “MLG gaps”? Indicator = number of mentions	Has it been mentioned in the policy document?	To which governance issue is related?	Does it consider the interaction between/within levels?
	<i>Description of the type of instrument/mechanism</i>	<i>Policy stage</i>	<i>Pillars of policy process</i>	<i>Type of interaction</i>
Administrative	<p>Working methods for effective and coherent urban policy-making and implementation, beyond administrative borders and based on goal achievement. A clear definition of tasks between different levels should lead to policy <i>coordination</i></p> <p>Type of instruments: strategic planning, functional areas, cross-sectoral bodies, etc.</p>			

(continued)

Table 2.2 (continued)

Does the Urban Agenda consider MLG at objective and/or action level? <i>If YES, proceed with the analysis</i>	Does the Urban Agenda establish a specific instrument/mechanism to promote MLG or to address the “MLG gaps”? Indicator = number of mentions	Has it been mentioned in the policy document?	To which governance issue is related?	Does it consider the interaction between/within levels?
Policy	<p><i>Description of the type of instrument/mechanism</i></p> <p>Joint decision-making and implementation that involve different levels and take into account their needs. A clear attribution of responsibilities and opportunities for repeated interaction between stakeholders should favour engagement and <i>cooperation</i></p> <p>Example of instruments: multi-stakeholder analysis, participative procedures, coalition-building, multi-stakeholder bodies, periodic meetings, etc.</p>	Policy stage	Pillars of policy process	Type of interaction

Source Authors' elaboration

The analysis has been carried out at a twofold-level: content (objectives) and process (Action Plan), focused particularly on the Strategic Objective 10 “Improve the instruments of intervention and the governance” (SO10) at the *level of content* and the NAAP at the *level of the process*. This level is aimed at reinforcing the implementation of the SUA by intervening in five specific domains: (a) normative, (b) planning, (c) governance, (d) funding and (e) knowledge. The selection responds to their explicit relation to MLG.

In terms of *content*, the SUA covers all five “MLG gaps” (see Table 2.3), with different degrees of intensity. The current document is mainly focused on the “administrative gap”, followed by the “policy” gap. The gaps of “capacity”, “information” and “funding” are also addressed, but to a lesser extent. The reason for prioritizing the “administrative” and “policy” gaps is twofold. On the one hand, the documental

Table 2.3 The relevance of the “MGL gaps” in the context of the SUA

Description of the objective	To which MLG gaps are related?					
	MLG gaps					
SUA (SO10)	Impact	Information	Capacity	Fiscal/funding	Administrative	Policy
10.1 Regulatory and planning	17	2	0	0	11	4
10.2. Citizen participation and MLG	25	6	1	2	8	8
10.3. Capacity-building and funding	26	2	4	11	5	4
10.4. Campaigns and dissemination of information	19	2	8		3	6
Total		12	13	13	27	22
<i>NAAP</i>						
Normative	8	0	0	0	7	1
planning	4	0	0	0	2	2
Governance and participation	12	2	2	0	4	4
Funding	9	1	1	2	2	3
Knowledge exchange and dissemination	44	11	15	0	11	7
Total		14	18	2	17	14
Total SO10 + NAAP		26	31	15	44	36

Source Authors' elaboration

Maximal scores are indicated in bold values. On the one hand, they highlight which are the sub objectives and the NAAP intervention areas on which both strategy and action are focused. On the other, they indicate the maximum value achieved by each one of them in relation to the MLG gaps

evidence reveals that the most critical aspects of the Spanish context have been traditionally related to the administrative and intergovernmental barriers (see Appendix 1). On the other, the fact is that the policy initiator (namely the Ministry of Public Works) has a limited capacity to intervene in a policy field where strategic competences (e.g. territorial planning) are formally attributed to Autonomous Communities that usually act as gatekeepers.

The capacity of intervention at a national level is particularly related to capacity-building, guiding and information provision (statistical data) and networking. Therefore, in terms of *process*, the action of the NAAP is more focused on the “capacity gap”, but closely followed by the “administrative” and the “policy” and “information” gaps. In any case, “funding” scores very low since there is no specific budget allocated to the SUA. This highlights not only the great dependence that SUA has (especially, from the EU through the Structural Funds), but also that the real capacity to intervene on a national level in this policy field is mainly based on a high number of “soft” actions that reinforce the relationship between the national and local levels.

It is important to note that in terms of relevance, among the four specific objectives of SO10, 10.2. (which is explicitly aimed at promoting MLG) and 10.3 are the ones that have a stronger impact on the “MLG gaps”. The scores point out that the way in which the SUA addresses MLG gaps is mainly promoting citizen participation and capacity-building. In the case of the NAAP, it is through “knowledge exchange and dissemination”.

Besides, MLG has been analysed according to the following dimensions: “policy stage”, “pillars of policy process” and type of “interaction between/within levels” (see the results in Appendix 2). In terms of *policy stage*, SO10 is clearly oriented to implementation due to the high number of action lines proposed ($n = 46$). The NAAP also reinforces the implementation in terms of MLG. However, there is no coherence between the action lines and the selected indicators (only 9) and they are not suitable to measure MLG (in terms of neither the outputs nor the outcomes). Based on this, evaluation emerges as the weakest stage of the SUA.

The *pillars of policy process* help to analyse to what extent the SUA supports MLG through “better regulation, better funding and better knowledge” as well as “participation” and “partnership” (all of them rooted in the Urban Agenda for the EU). According to our analysis, SO10 is mainly focused on the “better regulation” aspects, followed by “better knowledge”. “Better funding” is clearly the weakest point. The NAAP is more oriented to promoting “better knowledge” and “partnership”.

The dominant *type of interaction* promoted by the SUA is horizontal. Most action lines and indicators are related to the interaction or link between the public and private sectors (i.e.: citizens, associations, economic organizations); intra-administration (cross-sectoral cooperation), or between the same territorial levels (cooperation between cities or networking). When the interaction is vertical, it is more about the relation between the national and local levels. This confirms that a horizontal dynamic is preferred and easier to implement than vertical coordination, which requires more institutional changes (e.g. in planning rules, sharing formal jurisdiction, agreements to deliver joint action).

2.5 Conclusions

The genealogy of the Spanish Urban Agenda is related to the urban Europeanization process taken place through different mechanisms since the 1990s (González Medina 2013; González Medina et al 2017). It is worth noting that no other member states made the commitment to develop a national Urban Agenda during the negotiations of their Partnerships Agreements (2014–2020) with the European Commission. As mentioned, this shows a relevant level of exposure of the Spanish context to the urban policy of the EU, something that the literature has related to the lack of an explicit national urban policy (De Gregorio Hurtado 2017, 2018).

To a certain extent, the supranational levels are shaping urban policy in Spain. The Agenda 2030 (SDGs) of the United Nations and the Urban Agenda for the European Union have affected the *status quo* because, by being external, they provide a legitimization for the national level to intervene at an urban level and to overcome decisional barriers at a regional level. Moreover, “governing by objectives” (instead of by regulation) does not require essential normative change, while internal input is not able to exert any transformation because of the barriers they find.

This decentralized institutional setting and the sharing of competences related to it have had an important impact in Spanish urban policy-making. In this complex context, MLG becomes a vital condition for policy success. Therefore, MLG becomes the central aspect analysed in this chapter. The approach evidences the structural limitation of the country in advancing towards a self-defined agenda and it also explains, to an extent, the fact that the SUA promotes the voluntary role of cities towards a sustainable urban future, providing ideas and guidelines for action at a local level, but without initiating any reflection on the essence of the MLG characterization that has determined urban policies in the last 40 years: the necessary collaboration among the three main levels of government.

The analysis undertaken reveals that the SUA tries to address many of the “MLG gaps” identified in the Spanish context. Nevertheless, the overall consideration of the action proposed, both in terms of content and process, reveals that it is not aimed at changing the main limitations that have characterized the multi-level governance dynamic regarding urban issues. One difficulty is that the Autonomous Communities are not really engaged with the SUA (some of them started their own agenda process before, as in the case of Andalusia). Besides, the SUA is aimed more at reinforcing the relationship between the national and local levels. In fact, many of the actions foreseen and the relevant involvement of the FEMP (Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces) in the dissemination and during the design of the Agenda confirm significant steps in this direction.

Nevertheless, one of the main pitfalls of the Spanish urban framework (the necessity to overcome fragmentation and advance towards a collaborative policy style with regards to urban policies) has not even been addressed, and as such remains and will determine the effectiveness of the SUA in the medium term. This is because the regions have relevant competences and economic resources to determinate the urban futures of their territories. This fact introduces uncertainty but also opens the

possibility of a “two-level games” (Putnam 1988) in which the cities of reactive regions could be willing to reinforce their relations and informal agreements with the national level in the framework of the SUA to have access to networks, knowledge, capacity and financial resources. Currently, there are no formal changes in the institutional setting that modify the balance of power between all tiers of government (e.g. sharing of competences, finance autonomy, etc.).

This is a relevant issue that needs to be made visible giving place to a common reflection, involving all the agents that operate in the urban domain. The country needs to start a debate in order to avoid the continuous repetition of the fragmented scenario that has traditionally minimized the effectiveness and transformative capacity of urban policies. The green transition, but also other emerging and pressing changes need to advance on the presumption of collaboration among all the government tiers. The objective of this study has been to shed light on the issue and provide evidence that helps to assess the potential of the SUA as a real lever towards a new multi-level urban policy scenario.

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Appendix 1

Manifestation of the “MLG gaps” in the Spanish context

‘MLG gaps’	Evidence identified in the Spanish context
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Lack of information systems enabling citizens to be aware of and compare the effectiveness and efficiency of the different policies and public services; – Lack of information or methodology that encumbers cost and impact analysis (policy funding); – Lack of information systems to manage public policy, complications for inter-operability of the different applications designed by the Regional Governments – Lack of updated data or deficient data entry (AEVAL 2011) – Need of shared information systems for the management of public policies (SUA 2019: 38)
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Insufficient structure and capacity of local entities to access funding sources, as well as for their management (SUA SWOT Analysis SO 10 2019: 252)
Fiscal/funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Local administrations have an endemic shortage of the local funding. They demand more funds, as they are the closest administration to citizens’ demands, – Insufficient financing of policies or services (SUA 2019: 38)

(continued)

(continued)

'MLG gaps'	Evidence identified in the Spanish context
Administrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of integral planning processes which can hinder the coherence and complementarity of policies (AEVAL 2011) - Blurring of jurisdictions; - Excess of regulations (CORA 2013: 87) - Long terms of urban planning, producing a gap between the implementation of the plans and the needs foreseen in them; - Complex and heterogeneous regulatory system in urban matters, which hinders the application of the different plans and urban management; - Lack of flexibility of planning instruments, to adapt the plans to new demands or unforeseen needs that may arise in the city; - Normative and administrative rigidity for the reuse of endowments and publicspaces, and for the insertion of new uses in case of “underutilization”; - Difficult coexistence of the different sectoral plans and local planning. (SUA SWOT Analysis SO 10 2019: 252) - Insufficient relation between the decisions taken by the different administrative levels, the possible duplications or inefficiencies, the lack of shared or integrated planning processes (SUA 2019: 38)
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Absence of participatory, common or cooperative procedures at administrative and political level (AEVAL 2011) - Overlapping functions; - No traditions of cooperating (CORA 2013: 87) - Deficient territorial planning, with an absence of coordination between supra-municipal instruments and local instruments.

Source Authors' elaboration

Appendix 2

Analysis of the SUA from an MLG perspective: content and process

SUA Objective level (SOIO)	With which MLG gaps are related?				To which governance issue is related? <i>Pillars of policy process</i>							
	Relevance	Impact	MLG gaps			Better			PrinciplesKin			
			Information	Capacity	Fiscal/ funding	Administrative	Policy	Regulation	Funding	Knowledge	Participation	Partnership
10.1 Regulatory and Planning framework	13	17	2	0	0	11	4	11	1	2	1	4
10.2. Citizen participation and MLG	14	25	6	1	2	8	8	11	1	5	7	5
10.3. Capacity- building and Funding	12	26	2	4	11	5	4	0	9	3	1	5
10.4. Campaigns and Dissemi- nation of information	7	19	2	8	0	3	6	2	0	7	5	3
Total			12	13	13	27	22	24	11	17	14	17
National Administra- tion Action Plan (NAAP)	Relevance	Impact	Information	Capacity	Fiscal/ funding	Administrative	Policy	Regulation	Funding	Knowledge	Participation	Partnership
Normative	9	8	0	0	0	7	1	7	0	0	0	0
Planning	2	4	0	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	0

(continued)

SUA Objective level (SOIO)	With which MLG gaps are related?				To which governance issue is related? <i>Pillars of policy process</i>								
	Relevance	Impact	MLG gaps			Better				PrinciplesKin			
			Information	Capacity	Fiscal/funding	Administrative	Policy	Regulation	Funding	Knowledge	Participation	Partnership	
Governance and Participation	5	12	2	2	0	4	4	4	5	0	3	1	4
Funding	3	9	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	3
Knowledge exchange and Dissemination	18	44	11	15	0	11	7	6	2	2	14	9	10
Total			14	18	2	17	14	13	4	4	17	10	17
Total SOIO + NAAP			26	31	15	44	36	37	15	15	34	24	34
SUA Objective level (SOIO)													
Does it explicitly consider the interaction* between/within levels? <i>Type of interaction</i>													
Vertical													
Horizontal													
Description of the objective	L	R	N	Int	C	A	E	I = A	I = T				
10.1 Regulatory and Planning framework	4				0								
10.2. Citizen participation and MLG	2				12								
10.3. Capacity-building and Funding	6				5								
10.4. Campaigns and Dissemination of information	1				7								
Total	13				24								
National Administration Action Plan (NAAP)	Vertical			Horizontal									
Normative	2			0									

(continued)

(continued)

SUA Objective level (SO10)	Does it explicitly consider the interaction* between/within levels? <i>Type of interaction</i>									
	Vertical					Horizontal				
	L	R	N	Int		C	A	E	I = A	I = T
Description of the objective										
Planning	2					2				
Governance and Participation	4					3				
Funding	3					3				
Knowledge exchange and Dissemination	9					15				
Total	16					21				
Total SO10 + NAAP	29					45				

Indicator: implicit/explicit mentions at objective/action/indicator level

Relevance = *n* of action lines/actions embedded in each objective. **Impact on MLG gaps** = Sum of scores of each objective. **Vertical:** between different territorial levels (Local, **R**egional, **N**ational, **I**nternational)/**Horizontal:** between public and private sector (Citizens, **A**ssociations, **E**conomic organizations/Intra-Administration (**I = A**)/Between the same territorial level (**I = T**))

Source authors' elaboration

Maximal scores are indicated in bold values. First, it is highlighted which are the subobjectives and the NAAP intervention areas that have achieved a higher score in terms of relevance and impact. Second, they indicate the maximum value achieved by each one of them in relation to the dimensions of analysis, namely: (1) MLG gaps, (2) pillars of the policy process and (3) type of interaction

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Chapter 3

Urban Policies in Portugal



Cristina Cavaco, Rui Florentino and Ana Pagliuso

Abstract This chapter claims that a Portuguese national urban agenda has been further consolidated and improved since the 1990s, having the European Union as one of its major engine and drivers. After a first overview of the background on urban policies in Portugal, a number of policy programs were studied (*Polis*, *Polis XXI* and *Portugal 2020*, among others), focusing on cities and sustainable urban development during the last three European Union policy programming cycles. The analysis focuses, mainly, on the typology of interventions, including target areas and actors involved, their management, governance models and implementation tools, in order to discuss major tendencies and alignments with international urban agendas. Concepts such as sustainable development, place-based policy or integrated territorial development are at the core of the debate, along with the rhetorical mainstream developed at a European and international level. The chapter settles that, in the studied period, urban policies in Portugal were progressively released from pure physical actions to adopt a rather strategic, integral, governance-based approach, encompassing community programs. The scaling up of the Portuguese national urban policy (NUP) happened at several levels, and now Portugal is considered as an explicit NUP holder, despite no consensus existing on the matter.

Keywords National urban policies · Portugal · Urban regeneration · Sustainable urban development

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3.1 Introduction

According to the OECD's assessment on national urban policies (NUP) across 35 OECD countries (OECD 2017), Portugal owns an explicit NUP, currently under implementation. The classification refers to the existence of a policy strategy [Sustainable Cities 2020 (Cavaco et al. 2015)], approved in 2015 under a Government Resolution, (Conselho de Ministros 2015) that establishes "principles and guidelines for sustainable urban development" at a national level (OECD 2017). Based on the definition of NUP given by the UN-Habitat,¹ the report considers that Portugal provides for a strategic framework for cities that covers different urban dimensions (urban cores, functional urban areas and networks of cities) and policy fields (economic development, spatial structure, human development, environmental sustainability and climate resilience), although not always directly linked to EU funding (OECD 2017).

This issue is not as straightforward as reported by the OECD and went through a number of significant changes, namely in the last thirty years. Former studies have acknowledged: the fragmented and discontinuous character of urban policies in Portugal, the absence of a genuine explicit NUP, the poor coordinated spatial development in times of high urbanization pressure, the lack of opportunity for local authorities to develop autonomous policies and the difficulty to articulate the programming of national priorities with local policy frameworks (Van Den Berg et al. 2004; Portas et al. 2004; Breda-Vázquez et al. 2009).

Despite the shortcomings, it has also been recognized that the need for a NUP became a national concern in the 1990s, while increasing attention has been put on cities and integrated urban development policies (Conselho Económico e Social 1997; Marques da Costa 1999; Van Den Berg et al. 2004). The hosting of the International Exhibition EXPO 98 in Lisbon is often considered as the engine for the implementation of a NUP in Portugal. The Eastern part of Lisbon (a former industrial area that was the location of petrochemical plants) has been entirely renewed into a new urban district, becoming the ground for the launching of further urban programs.

This chapter argues that a Portuguese national urban agenda has been further consolidating since the 1990s, having the European Union as one of its major catalysts and drivers. In parallel, to the strengthening of the national spatial planning system and the progressive coverage of Portugal's mainland by territorial plans, a number of initiatives and programs focusing on cities and urban development were drawn up and implemented, fostered by the allocation of European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) in the several Community Support Frameworks (CSF).

After a first overview of the background on urban policies in Portugal, the analysis is structured into three different sections. The first section addresses the 2000–2006

¹"A coherent set of decisions derived through a deliberate government-led process of coordination and rallying various actors for a common vision and goal that will promote more transformative productive, inclusive and resilient urban development for the long term" (UN-Habitat 2014; OECD 2017).

period (CSF III) and focuses on the *Polis Program*, a policy initiative oriented toward the promotion of urban and environmental regeneration. The second section moves up to the 2007–2013 period (CSF IV—QREN²) and addresses the *Polis XXI*, the first policy initiative in Portugal receiving the explicit coinage of a policy for cities. The third section considers the current programming period of 2014–2020 (CSF V—Portugal 2020) structured upon the strategic framework of *Sustainable Cities 2020* and a set of operational tools framed under the Partnership Agreement *Portugal 2020*. Apart from positioning Portuguese policy initiatives within the background of the European urban agenda, the analysis considers a framework of different aspects such as: the typology of actions and target areas; the governance models, as well as the different actors involved; the territorial coverage of the programs; and the range of implementation tools.

A fourth section is also introduced to wrap up major tendencies regarding the analytical framework and discuss the alignments with both international and European urban agendas. The chapter conveys the message that, over the last decades, urban policy was progressively released from the physical actions to adopt a rather strategic-, integrated-, governance- and community-based approaches (Cavaco 2018). Concepts such as sustainable development, place-based policy or integrated territorial development are at the core of the discussion, along with the rhetorical mainstream developed at a European and international level that lead to the approval, in 2016, of both the New Urban Agenda Habitat III and the Urban Agenda for the European Union.

3.2 Outlining the Background

The 1990s brought fundamental changes in the Portuguese urban policy. Apart from an important push on land-use planning, after Municipal Master Plans (PDM) had been made mandatory (Ministério do Planeamento e da Administração do Território 1990) and land uses had been regulated all over the country, several urban policy initiatives came up, pushed either by the Portuguese Government or the EU, that put Portugal on the road for a national urban agenda.

In the early 1990s, despite the growing emphasis on socially sensitive urban areas and integrated urban EU regeneration programs (Pagliuso 2016), in Portugal, the first Regional Development Plan 1989–1993 (Ministério do Planeamento e da Administração do Território 1989) was built without an integrated urban regeneration view. Nevertheless, it made possible to carry out infrastructures, especially water sanitation and road infrastructures, which were of the utmost importance for the development of urban areas all around the country, although without being strategically planned.

During the same period, framed under EU-led urban policy initiatives, Lisbon and Oporto participated in the URBAN I Pilot projects, together with 31 cities in 10 other member states. This experimental program was aimed at promoting comprehensive

²QREN: National Strategic Reference Framework.

projects to generate both public and private investment and maximize the physical impact of urban investments. With the experience and success of the Pilot phase, URBANI Community Initiative was launched to encourage “particularly innovative strategies for sustainable economic and social regeneration” [European Commission 2000c: 9 cited in (Blom-Hansen 2005)] and stimulate a dynamic local development with an eye to deprived urban communities with wicked problems (Pagliuso 2016). Five Portuguese³ cities, among 110 financed programs, participated in the call. The objectives were: to re-create social cohesion; to rehabilitate green fields; to renew basic infrastructures, as well as to regenerate the urban fabric in general; and to develop local partnerships in order to foster capacity building within local communities.

The second RDP 1994–1999 (Ministério do Planeamento e da Administração do Território 1994a) brought a significant conceptual breakthrough. For the first time, an operational intervention was dedicated to the enhancement of the urban environment and the revitalization of urban areas, integrating actions oriented toward the improvement of environmental quality in large urban concentrations and the regeneration of deprived urban areas. Although they were integrated actions, involving policy sectors such as the environment and spatial planning, and different tiers of government, not all achieved full implementation due to the complexity of tutelages and jurisdictions falling into place.

This shift of Portuguese urban policies toward a paradigm of environmental sustainability and integrated urban regeneration found common ground under European and International values. After the approval, by the United Nations, of the Brundtland Report (1987) and the Agenda 21 (1992), the “Charter of Aalborg—European cities and towns for sustainability” came into play in 1994, to encourage and guide cities and towns toward the implementation of Local Agendas 21 in view of sustainable urban development.

In parallel, Portugal launched the PROSIURB (Program for the Consolidation of the National Urban System and Support for the Implementation of the Municipal Master Plans, 1994–1999) (Ministério do Planeamento e da Administração do Território 1994b) with the purpose to enhance the development of medium-sized cities (Sá Marques 2002). Placing the emphasis on both socioeconomic development and strategic planning, PROSIURB was viewed as a complement to the PDMs (Municipal Master Plans) and land-use planning, challenging cities and local authorities to test alternative models of integrated urban planning. Besides the focus on the improvement of the urban environment and the strengthening of social cohesion, the PROSIURB put particular attention on the promotion of multilevel institutional cooperation, as well as on the consolidation of the urban system. Nevertheless, concrete actions were limited since the Program contribution rates were 15% for actions co-financed by the Structural Funds and 50% from other sources (Ministério do Planeamento e da Administração do Território 1994b), and direct impacts were not as effective as foreseen.

³Amadora, Gondomar, Lisbon, Loures, Oeiras and Oporto.

As in PROSIURB's program, in Europe, until the mid-nineties, several urban regeneration operations fall short of expectations. However, they planted seeds for future actions (Pagliuso 2016). For this reason, from the end of the last century, European urban regeneration policies began to adopt new integrated approaches with the incorporation of social actions, mobility and accessibility policies, social housing and, more recently, environmental and sustainability policies (European Union 2010).

Apart from the URBAN Community Initiative, further steps were done by the European Union during the 1990s, in order to open up the way for the establishment of an urban agenda for the EU. One of the most decisive steps was the approval, on May 1999, of the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) (European Commission 1999), which became an important ground for the development of urban and spatial planning policies at the national level.

3.3 Polis Program (2000–2006): A National Policy Program Focused on the Requalification of Urban Areas

Portugal became closely involved in European territorial cooperation since the 1990s. The adoption of the ESDP had direct impacts on national spatial planning policies, in particular in the definition of the first national Spatial Planning Act (1998) and the subsequent approval of spatial development programs and plans at a national and regional level. The follow-up of European programs such as URBAN and URBACT also provided a political stimulus for the development of national urban policies (Campos and Ferrao 2015). Besides, the launch of European strategic documents reflecting on cities and sustainable development, such as the *Acquis URBAN*⁴ (2005), not only came to root the basis for an EU urban agenda (URBAN-Future 2005), as fostered integrated sustainable development approaches, influencing national agendas on the recognition that economic growth, social cohesion and environmental protection must go hand in hand (European Commission 2001).

Framed under such European framework and having the experience of the urban renovation of Lisbon 98 International Expo site as a reference, the Portuguese Government launched the Polis program as a main national urban policy—Program for Urban Requalification and Environmental Improvement of Cities (Conselho de Ministros 2000). Approved in the sequence of the Regional Development Plan in 1999, it started a timeline framework for the next urban policies generation in Portugal.

The Program took advantage of the financial resources offered by the CSF III (2000–2006) and aimed to promote the requalification of Portuguese cities from an urban and environmental point of view (Queirós and Vale 2005).

Given the previous experience of the PROSIURB, a strategic plan in each city was required (Cabral 2002). This made different initiatives to be considered, especially

⁴After ten years experiences within the Community Initiative URBAN I and II, the URBAN Network France and the German–Austrian URBAN Network together with 40 URBAN cities from 10 different member states elaborated the “Declaration of Strasbourg” (“Acquis URBAN”).

the ones related to urban regeneration. The program was based on four components: (i) integrated operations for urban and environmental rehabilitation; (ii) interventions in cities classified as “World Heritage” areas; (iii) urban and environmental enhancement of rehousing areas; (iv) complementary measures to improve urban and environmental conditions.

In order to streamline administrative procedures and manage the necessary revenues, a new governance and management model was tested based on the constitution of partnerships between the City Councils and the State—*Sociedades Polis* (Queirós and Vale 2005). Either public enterprises or program contracts were created for management purposes, while investment was allocated in the central government (60% by means of European Structural and Investment Fund—ESIF) and in the municipalities (40%) (Florentino and Nunes da Silva 2009; Mamede et al. 2009). Seventy-eight percent of the total investment in the Program was applied to integrated operations for urban requalification and environmental improvement (component 1).

These enterprises *Sociedades Polis* did not have a technical background. Only decision-making and management tasks were considered, while cities councils’ technical departments were used to carry out design and implementation procedures. The role of these enterprises was one of the advantages of the Polis Program, since they operate at two different levels: the planning commitment and the physical infrastructure, leaving other managing responsibilities to the public administration. This institutional framework allowed keeping a strong presence of technical support near the territory.

The Polis Program had two phases. In the first one, 18 cities were selected based on criteria such as urban requalification of areas in mid-sized cities with economic capacity and low quality of life; requalification of industrial abandoned areas; improvement of seafronts and riverside areas; urban rehabilitation and reintegration of historic buildings and natural heritage; strengthening of emblematic designs; and availability of strategic plans or consensual urban intervention projects already discussed and approved (Conselho de Ministros 2000). In the second phase, 10 other cities were selected through a National Competition. During the Polis Program, only 20 cities had projects approved, which resulted in a delay in the execution of the actions and some of the cities did not carry out any action financed by the Polis.

The objectives of the Program were especially addressed to the quality of the urban environment, the increase of green urban areas, the promotion of mixed uses in urban centers and the requalification of public spaces. Actions were mainly oriented toward the development of urban regeneration projects with a strong emphasis on environmental concerns, clearly reflecting the increasing attention put on sustainability European and international wise. It involved the rehabilitation of public spaces (e.g., Albufeira, Viana do Castelo); the creation of green urban parks (e.g., Coimbra, Castelo Branco); the creation of parking areas (e.g., Leiria, Matosinhos); the building of new urban facilities, as well as housing (e.g., Matosinhos, Cacém, Viseu); and the regeneration of waterfronts, either riverside areas (e.g., Coimbra, Viana do Castelo, Leiria) or seashore areas (e.g., Albufeira; Matosinhos, Costa da Caparica).

According to Cabral, the amount of capital invested by public entities in projects with such a strong physical component has had significant impacts on real estate development and the increase of land values, without ensuring the necessary social participation, consensus building and bargaining. The central government assumed, in a discretionary way, the selection of cities to be part of the program, which raises important issues in what regards the distribution of powers and responsibilities between the central and the local tiers of government (Cabral 2002).

Apart from the Polis Program, other EU-led initiatives came up that carried out important contributions for national urban policies. In 2003, following the experiences of the URBAN Community Initiatives, the URBACT program was created at a European level as part of the URBAN II (European Commission 2006). Contrary to the other programs, URBACT did not entail the implementation of urban action programs but rather the creation of European transnational networks, involving cities of different member states with the aim of sharing knowledge and experiences. In Portugal, it has had a significant impact with ever more cities involved in URBACT's network or being attested as reference cases for good practices.

3.4 Polis XXI (2007–2013): The First Policy for Cities Stamped as Such in Portugal

In the 2007–2013 programming cycle, the strengthening of the urban dimension in the European policy agenda was promoted at several levels. Politically, with the formal adoption of the territorial dimension as part of the Cohesion Policy (Treaty of Lisbon (European Union 2007a), and the inclusion of the urban agenda within the official Territorial Agenda (European Union 2007b). Rhetorically, with the strengthening of principles such as integrated urban development and regeneration, polycentric development and new forms of partnership and territorial governance, conveyed on non-binding documents as are the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities (European Union 2007b) and the Declaration of Toledo (European Union 2010). Operationally, with the *URBAN mainstreaming*, i.e., the integration of the URBAN Community Initiative into the mainstream of Operational Programs, leaving to the member states the prerogative to formulate their own initiatives and opening to all cities the possibility to become potential beneficiaries of the EU Cohesion Policy (Directorate-General for Regional Policy 2008; Hamza et al. 2014).

Portugal benefited from such a doctrinal and operational environment. Polis XXI, the first cities' policy inscribed as such in Portugal, came along with the European mainstream. It not only took advantage from the funding opportunities and innovations offered by the European Commission in this period (expanded to up until 3% of ERDF), but also innovated in the design of a multidimensional policy framework that clearly amplified the Portuguese NUP at several levels: target areas, typology of interventions and forms of governance (Cavaco 2018). The goals established in the policy's document aimed at: (i) "add a broader vision to the intra-urban dimen-

sion in which urban development is conceived either in the framework of national and international urban networks or in the context of the region”; (ii) “put physical interventions at the service of a more integrated vision that considers cities as spaces of social cohesion, economic competitiveness and environmental quality”; and (iii) “stimulate new forms of governance based on greater participation of citizens and the involvement of several urban actors (...)” (Gabinete do Secretário de Estado do Ordenamento do Território e das Cidades 2008).

Thus, instead of merely focusing on specific urban areas, as the Polis Program did, Polis XXI broadened the scope to other target areas, such as cities’ networks and city regions. The city was considered under a triple-lens (intra-urban; inter-urban and city region). This demanded different types of intervention and policy tools: *urban regeneration* of intra-urban spaces based upon integrated approaches (looking for the enhancement of living environments in terms of housing, mobility, social cohesion or environmental quality); *competitiveness* of cities as nodes of a system, looking for either their mutual cooperation or promotion, both at a national and international level; and *regional integration* of cities as functional urban areas, looking for the creation of regional complementarities structured upon the relationships between subregional urban centers and rural hinterlands (Gabinete do Secretário de Estado do Ordenamento do Território e das Cidades 2008).

Supported by the European Funds deployed under the Operational Programs (QREN 2007–2013), a number of policy tools were provided to address urban development in its multidimensional extent: *Partnerships for Urban Regeneration* (PRU), *Urban Networks for Competitiveness and Innovation* (RUCI), *Innovative Actions for Urban Development* (AIDU) and *Structural Equipment’s of the National Urban System*.

PRU have gained significant prominence in face to the other tools, not only in terms of the number of projects approved (84.6% of the total operations; 1303 PRU against a total of 1540 projects), but also regarding the amount of eligible investment (62.6% of the total investment in urban development) (Barata Salgueiro et al. 2015). In contrast with to the previous Polis Program where cities were selected by the central government, in this period operations were selected based on a tender procedure. As such, 1303 PRU were approved from north to south, whose objective was the elaboration of an integrated action program based on the delimitation of an intervention area and the signing of local partnership. Taking stock of the URBAN initiatives, PRU embraced a myriad of measures ranging from the improvement of infrastructures to the regeneration of public spaces, the creation of urban facilities and social and economic development of urban areas. Different types of urban spaces were also considered, covering historical areas, waterfronts, abandoned brownfields, urban peripheries, as well as deprived neighborhoods. The focus was the establishment of local partnerships, the main device to foster the involvement and cooperation of several territorial actors (either public or private, as well as other non-governmental organizations) in the construction of shared integrated local agendas.

At this level, authors pointed out the innovative character of PRU (Vale and Queirós 2015; Queirós 2017), clearly adding to previous governmental initiatives (such as the Expo 98 and the Polis Program) on the empowerment of local author-

ities and non-statutory agencies, as well as the civil society. Like other European countries as is the case of the UK, these initiatives illustrate “how national-level urban policies aim to induce changes in the organization of local power by establishing partnerships for urban regeneration” (Breda-Vázquez et al. 2009, p. 2218).

PRU were built upon the pilot experience of Critical Neighborhoods Initiative (*Iniciativa Bairros Críticos*—IBC), a policy initiative focused on the social inclusion and integration of vulnerable communities launched in 2005 as an experimental program, exclusively addressed to three pilot areas: Cova da Moura and Vale da Amoreira both located in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon and Lagarteiro in Oporto. IBC aimed to introduce innovation on urban regeneration models. On the one hand, IBC offered genuine integrated territorial approaches, not only supporting catalysts projects to foster the regeneration of deprived neighborhoods (provide for new community facilities, improve the quality of public spaces, etc.), but also embracing social and economic territory-focused interventions. On the other hand, a new governance model was implemented, engaging local authorities, an inter-ministerial group, local stakeholders and the community itself. Funding was based on the bottom-up initiative of parties involved rather than on a pre-approved governmental financial envelope, demanding for the commitment and accountability of associate partners (Sousa 2008). Whether local effects were not as impactful as expected, in part because the initiative was abandoned in the following governmental cycle, it was considered a valuable contribution to territorial governance, adding institutional innovation and participation (Dependências 2014).

Despite being less popular than PRU and IBC, the Urban Networks for Competitiveness and Innovation (RUCI) also represented a new move for the NUP (only 184 projects were approved in a total of 1540) (Barata Salgueiro et al. 2015). The main objective was to foster the development of inter-municipal networks supported on the establishment of shared place-based strategic frameworks built upon the cooperation of several municipalities and local stakeholders. In a context where inter-municipal cooperation was far from satisfactory, RUCI performed a major paradigm shift in terms of inter-urban partnerships and collaboration in areas such as regional facilities (e.g., Douro Alliance), tourism (e.g., Beira Interior), or infrastructures and connectivity (e.g., Douro Azul). According to Pereira and Gil (2010), RUCI have had a relevant role to consolidate polycentric urban systems and reinforce the territorial structuring of proximity urban networks, a fundamental step toward territorial cohesion.

Taking advantage of the implementation in 2007 of the National Spatial Development Policy Program (PNPOT—the summit planning tool of the Portuguese spatial planning system that establishes, for the whole national territory, major strategic options regarding spatial development and territorial cohesion), Polis XXI gave particular attention to the strengthening of the national urban system, namely through the RUCI. Instead of limiting funding to pre-selected cities, the territorial model and the strategic guidelines established by the PNPOT were adopted as a main reference framework to assess and select operations submitted by the local authorities and partnerships. Other criteria such as strategic coherence, innovation and partnership engagement were taken into account on tender procedures.

Another significant aspect of this period respects the way a fragmented framework of multiple policy initiatives, from former governmental periods, were embraced under a single policy agenda. Apart from creating new policy tools, namely to frame the allocation of Structural Funds addressed to urban areas, Polis XXI took profit from existing national tools (e.g., Societies of Urban Regeneration) and funding programs (e.g., RECRIA, RECRIPH, REHABITA) in order to stimulate housing rehabilitation and enhance the participation of private capital, namely under the support of the EU's funding tool JESSICA.

Despite the lack of evaluations, the rooted feeling is that Polis XXI did not have the effects expected to the extent of such an ambitious and innovative policy. Reasoning points toward the adverse economic scenario (in face to the global financial crisis of 2008 and the constraints imposed by the international financial assistance to Portugal between 2011 and 2014), as well as the dispersion of operations by multiple municipalities.

Nonetheless, Polis XXI is considered a milestone in the country's urban policies (Ribeiro 2012). Apart from innovating in target areas, previously restricted to historic centers and other intra-urban sites, Polis XXI has amplified the scope and nature of interventions, introducing the social and economic dimensions neglected hitherto and encouraging the development of integrated territorial approaches. Innovations were especially significant in terms of multilevel governance based upon the promotion of local and inter-municipal partnerships, and bottom-up local strategies and action plans, involving different government levels, public and private stakeholders as well as the community.

3.5 Sustainable Cities 2020 (2014–2020): A Strategic Framework for Sustainable Urban Development Detached from Operational Tools

The debate and experiences during the 2007–2013 period have had an important role on the preparation of the following period 2014–2020 at a European and national level. The need to tackle space-blind policies and move toward a place-based development policy relying on tailor-made interventions came to the forefront of discussion (European Commission 2008; Barca 2009; European Union 2011), with impacts on the preparation of the 2014–2020 community programming cycle. A number of policy tools⁵ were created that endorse the application of ESIF, with the aim to stimulate multidimensional and cross-sectoral interventions, as well as foster territorial multilevel governance.

Moreover, the focus on cities and urban development has been highlighted at a discursive level throughout this period. A ring-fencing funding for urban affairs was

⁵Integrated Territorial Investments—ITI (European Commission 2014a, 2015), Community-Led Local Development—CLLD (European Commission 2014b) and Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation for Integrated Sustainable Urban Development—ISUD (European Commission 2014c).

adopted in this period, with minimum 5% of the ERDF to be applied on sustainable urban development. Apart from the common agreement on new doctrinal documents (e.g., Cities of Tomorrow and Riga Declaration), the Urban Agenda for the European Union has been adopted under the Dutch Presidency (2016), turning the idea outlined in 2004, in Rotterdam (Urban Acquis), into achievement. The initiative was also timely in the international scene, with the approval, by the United Nations, of both the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda of Habitat III (October 2016).

In Portugal, the preparation of a new CSF was viewed as an opportunity to arrange a new policy for cities, providing a coherent framework for the allocation of European Funds for urban affairs (Castro Neto and Ascenso 2015). After *Polis XXI*, when multidisciplinary interventions have been tried in urban areas, and participation and partnership governance models have come into play, a big challenge was to be faced. On the one hand, it was worthwhile to capitalize on previous programs and experiments and, at the same time, make the utmost use of funding opportunities offered by the European Union, especially in a time when, after the crisis, cities and local authorities have been cutting their spending on public works. It was an opportunity to add on the reform of the Portuguese spatial planning system underway since 2012. Among other aspects, the reform put the emphasis on the control of urban sprawl and real estate speculation, as well as on the strengthening of urban regeneration.

Sustainable Cities 2020 came to offer, at a national level, a *roadmap* (Cavaco 2015) for cities, local authorities and urban stakeholders to draw on sustainable urban development and design their own local strategies, looking for local empowerment and multidisciplinary stakeholder's involvement. It builds upon a territorial diagnosis that, in summary, laid out main national urban challenges (e.g., social cohesion and inclusion; demographic shrinkage; land-use discipline; urban regeneration; urban-rural integration; strategic governance and integration in the international space).

As in *Polis XXI*, three urban dimensions were established: urban (urban centers and built urban spaces); city region (areas of functional influence of the cities); and inter-urban dimension (network's relations between cities). Cities were acknowledged as crucial drivers for spatial development and territorial cohesion, structured upon the national and regional urban systems envisioned in the territorial models of both the National Spatial Development Policy Program (PNPOT) and the Regional Spatial Development Plans (PROT) (Cavaco et al. 2015).

Simultaneously, *Sustainable Cities 2020* built on an integrated action framework, demanding for the coordination between the several government levels (national, regional, subregional and municipal), the integration of a wide range of policy sectors (environment, transportations, education, health, etc.) and citizens' participation. Outlined according to four main strategic axes (intelligence and competitiveness; sustainability and efficiency; inclusion and human capital; territorialization and governance), it provided for a set of 53 specific policy measures to pursue more sustainable cities, considering the different urban dimensions and target areas.

Sustainable Cities 2020 was adopted as a national strategy by a Government Resolution in 2015 (Conselho de Ministros 2015). No funding operational tools were, however, directly addressed to the strategy, clearly weakening its own potential as a

policy urban agenda. Contrary to what happened in the previous period, when Government's organic structure joined together, under a singular Ministry, spatial planning (including cities) and regional development policies (with the responsibility of managing European Structural Funds), this time they were treated separately as two autonomous policy fields. While *Sustainable Cities 2020* arose under the umbrella of spatial planning policy, EU-led policy tools for integrated territorial investments and sustainable urban development (ITI - Integrated Territorial Investments, CLLD - Community Led Local Developments, ISUD - Integrated Sustainable Urban Development - article 7 of the ERDF) were developed under a different Ministry and directly negotiated with the European Commission, hardly ensuring a coordination and close articulation with the urban and spatial planning policy agendas. Such partition, as well as the disappearance of the Secretary of State to explicit address cities' issues, underlines that *Sustainable Cities 2020* had indeed no practical implications, also questioning whether urban policy is being undermined in the national policy agenda (Ferrão 2018).

Aside from the strategic framework, the financing and implementation of sustainable urban development were instead framed by the Portugal 2020 (the EU Partnership Agreement for the 2014–2020 programming cycle), sheltered under the chapter of “integrated approach for territorial development in the application of the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)” (Governo de Portugal 2014). A myriad of policy tools came up to comply with the EU-led policy initiatives, either framed by the several Thematic Operational Programs (Competitiveness and Internationalization; Social Inclusion and Employment; Human Capital, Sustainability and Efficiency in the use of resources) or the five Regional Operational Programs that correspond to each NUTS II (Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics): OP North, OP Centre, OP Lisbon, OP Alentejo and OP Algarve.

The Common Provisions Regulation has introduced Integrated Territorial Investment (ITIs) as a key instrument in the implementation of integrated territorial strategies. It is a new flexible mechanism for drawing up integrated proposals without losing the thematic focus by which cohesion policy is linked to the Europe 2020 strategy. It also allows member states to implement Operational Programs on a cross-cutting basis to draw on priority multi-axis funds from one or more Operational Programs in order to ensure the implementation of an integrated strategy tailored to a specific territory.

However, in Portugal, instead of featuring non-administrative areas with “*place-specific features and outcomes*” (European Commission 2014a), ITIs were assigned to inter-municipal entities as intermediary bodies (associations of municipalities that correspond to NUTS III level), covering the entire mainland of Portugal. They entailed the signature of a partnership agreement,⁶ involving central government,⁷ inter-municipal entities and other non-governmental organizations and private stakeholders. Since ITIs (and further financing tools such as ISUD and CLLD) could only be used if the specific geographic area covered has an *integrated and cross-*

⁶PDCT—Partnerships for Territorial Development and Cohesion.

⁷By means of the de-concentrated services of CCDR/NUTS II.

cutting territorial strategy, 23 new Integrated Strategies for Territorial Development (EIDT) were produced at a supra-municipal level, providing not only for a strategic framework for territorial development, but also for a governance and monitoring framework. The quality of the partnerships and the degree of involvement of partners and territorial actors, as well as the demonstrated ability to manage and monitor the implementation of the strategy, were some of the dimensions taken into account in order for the EIDT to get a positive recognition. Despite all the EIDTs have been formally accepted, the global picture is quite uneven. While some evidence great strategic place-based maturity, anchoring their visions and approaches in thorough territorial diagnosis and spatial development models, others failed to demonstrate proper alignment with existing spatial planning tools in force, as well as to frame sustainable urban development and community-led local developments accordingly.⁸

Regarding the integrated sustainable urban development (ISUD— Article 7 ERDF), the decision was taken not to promote urban development operations by means of the ITI. ISUD, in turn, was made an autonomous axis of regional operational programs,⁹ narrowing the scope to just three investment priorities: promoting low-carbon strategies, including urban mobility; improve the urban environment and revitalize cities, including brownfields; and promoting the physical, social and economic regeneration of deprived communities. The call was specifically addressed to 104 pre-selected municipalities¹⁰ identified according to the OPs as “urban centers of superior level.” The contracting of the investment priorities between the local authorities and the managing authorities of the OPs were conditioned to the elaboration of strategic urban development plans (PEDUs).¹¹

In addition to ITIs and ISUD, in November 2014 the first call for Urban Community-led Local Developments (CLLDs) were also opened. Urban CLLDs were created by the European Commission to host bottom-up community-led initiatives, based on the creation of local partnerships and dealing with specific urban problems. In Portugal, the target of Urban CLLD was specifically oriented toward deprived urban communities located in the Metropolitan Areas of Lisbon and Oporto and in other urban centers of superior level, ranging between 10,000 and 150,000 inhabitants.

⁸In order to be formally recognized, the 23 EIDT were subject to an assessment process (between November 2014 and April 2015) made by an Evaluation Commission, composed of representatives from the National Agency for Development and Cohesion (ADC), the National Agency for Territorial Development (DGT) and the five Regional Coordination and Development Commissions (CCDR). Evaluation methodology considered three different analytical dimensions: (i) partnership and the involvement of relevant actors; (ii) management, follow-up and monitoring; (iii) alignment with regional strategies and spatial planning plans and programs.

⁹OP North, OP Centre, OP Lisbon and OP Alentejo.

¹⁰Out of 278 municipalities in Portugal’s mainland.

¹¹Under the umbrella of the PEDU, three other operational tools cropped up to guarantee alignment with the selected investment priorities: PAMUS—Action Plan for Sustainable Urban Mobility; PARU—Action Plan for Urban Regeneration; PAICD—Integrated Action Plan for Deprived Communities).

Although there is neither evaluation nor enough distance in time to assess the results of these policy initiatives, a prior insight raises some concerns regarding the profusion of actions and financing mechanisms, whose coherence and articulation are far from satisfactory. On the one hand, territorial development strategies established at a supra-municipal level (EIDT) hardly frame sustainable urban development and respective implementation tools. On the other hand, a number of incoherencies arose, such as the lack of articulation between this type of strategic documents (EIDT, PEDU) and the statutory planning tools in force (e.g., PDM). The separation between the strategic framework established at a national level (Sustainable Cities 2020) and the tool kit made available in *Portugal 2020* to foster integrated territorial approaches is another matter of concern.

3.6 Discussion and Conclusions

The analysis of national urban programs throughout all these periods shows considerable progresses on the Portuguese NUP, which has been gradually strengthening and enlarging its scope. Evolution trends show clear alignments with what have been the principles, guidelines and tools made available at an international level and, more precisely, by the European Union.

What started out as a circumscribed branch of national urban policies in the first CSF (1994–1999), having the Community Initiative URBAN, the PROSIURB and the urban operation of EXPO98 as three main kick-off initiatives, was progressively structured and enlarged in the last programming cycles. In the 2000–2006 period, based upon the experience of EXPO98 and nourished by the international paradigm of sustainability, the national Polis Program came to inject a great amount of resources in the physical and environmental requalification of urban areas.

Nonetheless, it was on the following periods (2007–2013 and 2014–2020) that a major paradigm shift within the national urban agenda was performed, providing for a complete framework of policy instruments that jump to other levels of interventions and urban governance.

Table 3.1 shows the evolution of urban policies in Portugal based upon the analysis of the main urban programs adopted during the several CSF. The scaling up of the Portuguese NUP happened at several levels, in a certain way explaining why Portugal is, now, considered as holding an explicit NUP:

- (i) The typology of target areas, expanded from inner-urban historic sites, city centers and degraded neighborhoods, to other types of sites such as brownfields or suburban areas, as well as to urban hinterlands and networks of cities (e.g., PRU and RUCI of Polis XXI);
- (ii) The actors involved, firstly limited to the public administration (central and local), to further include other stakeholders, either public or private, such as local non-governmental organizations, local associations, enterprises and the community;

Table 3.1 Evolution of urban policies in Portugal—1994 to 2020

Program	Promoting entity	Management entity	Governance	Goals	Type of intervention	Target area
PROSIURB (1994–1999)	Central Administration (Ministry of Planning and Territory administration)	Central Administration (DGOT, CCDR)	Coordination office inside of Central Administration	Consolidation of the national urban system and improvement of urban environment	Basic infrastructure, facilities and urban rehabilitation	Intra-urban areas
Urban (1994–2006)	European Union	Central Administration (CCDR)		Social and economic regeneration of cities and neighborhoods in crisis aiming to promote sustainable urban development	Rehabilitation of obsolete infrastructure with economic measures and effective actions in the labor market, combating social exclusion and improve the urban environment	Intra-urban areas

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Program	Promoting entity	Management entity	Governance	Goals	Type of intervention	Target area
Polis Program (2000–2006)	Central Administration (Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning)	Central Administration (Coordinating Office of the Polis Program)	Public companies with local authority and central government	Refurbishment of depressed industrial areas; creation of new urban or leisure polarities in metropolitan areas; valorization of waterfronts or river sides; valorization of historical or natural heritage and its reintegration into the city; refurbishment of medium-sized cities with economic strength but with urbanistic dysfunctions; and valorization of hinterland cities that may constitute poles of regional development	Public spaces, facilities, parking and regeneration of riverside and waterfront areas	Intra-urban areas
Polis XXI (2007–2013)	Central Administration (Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning)	Central Administration (OP, CCDR, City Council)	Local partnership	Integrated rehabilitation of intra-urban areas and improvement of urban environments	Integrated interventions (urban integral regeneration)	Intra-urban areas

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Program	Promoting entity	Management entity	Governance	Goals	Type of intervention	Target area
	RUCI			Promote cooperation and competitiveness of cities networks (national and international)	Thematic actions (urban structures, facilities, territorial marketing, international cooperation programs)	Inter-urban areas
	AIDU			Pilot projects to test innovative solutions to different urban issues	Thematic actions (proximity facilities, mobility, accessibility, sustainability, etc.); preferable immaterial actions	Intra-urban areas + Region

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Program	Promoting entity	Management entity	Governance	Goals	Type of intervention	Target area
Portugal 2020 (2014–2020)	Central Administration (Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning)	Central Administration (OP, CCDR, City Council) + Inter-municipal Entities	Local partnership	Constitution of pacts for subregional territorial development in the following areas: urban development, local economic competitiveness, social inclusion and territorial articulation in the provision of public services	Integrated interventions	Inter-urban areas + Region
		Central Administration (OP, CCDR, City Council) + Local Urban Authorities	Central Administration + Local partnership	The promotion of sustainable urban mobility; promotion of low-carbon strategies for urban areas; improvement of the urban environment (including regeneration of abandoned industrial areas and reduction of air pollution), and social inclusion through support for the physical, economic; and social regeneration of depressed urban areas	Integrated interventions (Integrated Action Plans for disadvantaged communities); sustainable urban mobility and urban regeneration for historic centers, degraded (industrial) areas	Intra-urban areas (Integrated Action Plans for disadvantaged communities and urban regeneration); inter-urban areas (sustainable urban mobility)

(continued)

Table 3.1 (continued)

Program	Promoting entity	Management entity	Governance	Goals	Type of intervention	Target area
	CLLD	Central Administration (OP, CCDR, City Council)	Local partnership	Promotion social inclusion through measures of social and economic innovation and social entrepreneurship in disadvantaged urban areas. Develop bottom-up actions	Social and economic actions and program toward communities' empowerment	Intra-urban areas

CCDR Regional coordination and Development Commissions, *DGOT* or *DGT* Directorate General for Territorial Development, *OP* Operational Program

- (iii) The governance models, moving from a top-down government model, supported on central government and administration services, to other institutional settings based on multilevel governance and the establishment of multi-actors partnerships and bottom approaches. Polis XXI put a particular emphasis on governance networks, which has been strengthened in this last programming cycle, namely with ITI and EIDT at an inter-municipal level;
- (iv) The typology of actions, earlier merely focused on sectorial-wide physical interventions oriented toward basic infrastructures, public spaces, urban equipment and the overall enhancement of the urban environment (e.g., Polis Program), to open up the scope to integrated approaches and immaterial actions, focused on social inclusion, development of local economies, promotion of mutual cooperation and governance mechanisms (e.g., PRU within Polis XXI; PAICD within Portugal 2020), as well as on capacity building and knowledge exchange (e.g., URBACT);
- (v) The diversity of implementation tools, firstly concentrated in singular programs with a narrow-range spectrum (e.g., Polis Program), to the multiplication of a wide range of policy initiatives that cover different targets and types of approaches (e.g. Polis XXI; Portugal 2020);
- (vi) And, finally, the territorial incidence or coverage, initially limited to very few cities and pilot areas (e.g., Polis Program with 18 cities involved), now broadened to every municipality, city or urban area interested in pursuing sustainable urban development approaches (e.g., Polis XXI; PEDU within Portugal 2020).

This shift on the Portuguese's political urban scenario came along with the general urban momentum conveyed internationally and, more particularly, by the European Union throughout the 1990s and thereafter. The main aspects are the growing emphasis addressed to urban development on the national political agendas of the member states (Van Den Berg et al. 2004); the empowerment of European cities and local authorities as engines of growth, competitiveness and innovation (Brenner 2003); the recognition of national urban systems as an important device for social and economic cohesion and a balanced spatial development (Ferrão 1997; Marques et al. 1997; European Commission 1999; Ferrão and Marques 2003); and the focus on urban areas by the European Union, namely upon the mainstream of policy initiatives specifically oriented toward urban actions and urban development, having cities as the direct beneficiaries of European Funds (Directorate-General for Regional Policy 2008; Hamza et al. 2014).

As in other European Countries, the European Union has been a major force to foster Portugal toward sustainable urban development policies. The European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) have been the most powerful agent of influence, namely through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), a primary source to support urban affairs.

The strengthening of the European urban agenda and the mainstreaming of the urban dimension within the Cohesion Policy since the 2007–2013 programming cycle clearly gave a push to stimulate the development of urban policies at a domes-

tic sphere. This became obvious in CSF 2007–2013, where Portugal undertook an explicit urban agenda, deliberately coined as a “*policy for cities.*”

In the current programming cycle 2014–2020, the ISUD approach was definitely reinforced at a European level (the Urban Agenda for the European Union was adopted; efforts were done by the European Commission to boost the urban dimension within the Cohesion Policy; a minimum of 5% of the ERDF for urban development was demanded as a mandatory condition to access ERDF funding). Moreover, other instruments such as the ITI and Urban CLLD were offered that would allow for the amplification of ISUD approaches and respective effects. On the one hand, the combination of ERDF with other funds (such as the European Social Fund—ESF; the Cohesion Fund, or even the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development—EAFRD) was encouraged in order to carry out the integration of physical investments with non-material actions oriented toward the human capital and rural–urban partnerships. On the other hand, the diversity of funding mechanisms would also encourage the holding of different types of approaches with respect to the actors involved and respective levels of responsibility, acknowledging the designation of intermediary bodies and local authorities other than the managing authorities of Operational Programs to carry out some of the management and implementation tasks.

In Portugal, all these instruments have been adopted under the Partnership Agreement *Portugal 2020*, which, in a certain way, automatically thickened national urban policies. Nevertheless, one cannot say that they were effectively embraced by a coherent comprehensive national urban agenda. Despite the fact that there is the *Sustainable Cities 2020*, a national strategy for sustainable urban development formally adopted by the Government in 2015 (although elaborated under the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Development), the issue is that the framework architecture for the allocation of ESIF for ISUD approaches was conceived by a different Ministry (Ministry of Regional Development), with very little articulation between the two of them. At the same time a number of policy instruments became available (ITI, ISUD under autonomous axis of OPs and Urban CLLD), the complexity and fragmentation of the whole framework increased. Instead of focusing efforts on promoting ISUD, making use of the different EU-led policy initiatives, what happened was the pulverization of funds through a myriad of tools, demanding for strategic documents and actions plans, whose coherence and intelligibility are, at best, hard to scrutinize and understand.

The formal adoption of a strategic policy document on sustainable urban development such as *Sustainable Cities 2020* evidences awareness of policy-makers to sustainable development and multilevel governance, as well as to the fact that “the complex challenges faced by cities cannot be solved by spatially blind sectoral policies” (UN-Habitat 2014). However, the existence of an explicit NUP in Portugal is not a matter of consensus. The coming into play of a strategic policy document that embraces, at a national level, integrated sustainable urban development is not synonymous of the effectiveness of the policy. Criticisms arose that question the focus and performance of the current framework, as consider that an explicit urban agenda is missing in Portugal, while cities are being vanished from the political agenda (Ferreira 2018). All the same, it cannot be forgotten that progresses were made over the

last decades. This evidences not only the programs and tools made available, but also the overall processes of local empowerment, capacity building, mutual learning and common networking.

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Chapter 4

Urban Governance in Latvia: Feeling Urban and Thinking Rural



Iveta Reinholde and Malvīne Stučka

Abstract Urbanisation is affecting not only countries with high number of residents but also with small number. The aim of the research is to explore urbanisation and shrinking city tendencies in a country with small number of residents in the context of globalization and urbanisation. The “donut effect” will be explored in the capital city Riga and ten municipalities nearby. The main research question is to what extent can the classical understanding and perception of urbanisation be applied to small societies and countries, and what kind of effects does the urbanisation create in such dynamically developing countries. There are several interdependent problems, such as the new patterns of urban–rural relations, as well as city discourse in a small country. The suburbanized ring municipalities included in the research are not only an extension of Riga’s economic geography, but also play an important role to ensure qualitative microclimate around the capital city. Due to these reasons, it is significant to coordinate growth strategies of municipalities around Riga. However, coordination of growth strategies is still lesson to be learned.

Keywords Urbanisation · Shrinking cities · Planning approach

4.1 Introduction

Urbanisation tendencies have affected Latvia, but in a somehow unique way. Due to economic and demographic reasons, Latvia is facing urbanization when more than half of the country’s population is located in the largest city and capital of the country—Riga. Such a tendency is leading to other tendencies like demographic and economic outflow of the rural areas in the rest of the country. Meanwhile, Riga, as the main urbanization centre, is facing another challenge—the capital is shrinking,

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since the citizens are choosing the capital as a place where to work, not a place where to live. This creates a “donut or ring effect” with a less populated city centre and overpopulated local municipalities and suburbs around the capital. However, such a “donut effect” is influencing relations between levels of governance, making some municipalities more economically and politically influential than others, thus negatively affecting several policy areas like education, economy, transport, tax redistribution and even foreign policy.

The aim of the chapter is to explore urbanisation and shrinking city tendencies in a country with small number of residents in the context of globalization and urbanisation. The “donut effect” will be explored in the following municipal units like Riga as a capital, and municipalities nearby—Jurmala city and several rural municipalities—Babite, Kekava, Marupe, Olaine, Salaspils, Stopini, Garkalne, Adazi and Carnikava.

The main research question is to what extent can the classical understanding and perception of urbanisation be applied to small societies and countries, and what kind of effects does the urbanisation create in such dynamically developing countries. Thus, the chapter will be focused around several interdependent problems, such as the new patterns of urban–rural relations, as well as city discourse in a small country. At the same time, due to the scale of economy and policy, spillover effects are observed affecting policy-making.

4.2 Shrinking Cities

The shrinking cities phenomenon was first observed some decades ago. In 1990, all major cities in Europe and USA had faced loss of population as a result of globalization, changes in world politics and economics (Röschlau 2013). According to the UN report, “World Urbanisation prospects” urban population is increasing by 2% every year since the millennium in the world (United Nations 2018).

At the same time, this trend reflects rather different tendencies for Central and Eastern Europe, where the general trend is showing shrinking of population in. Total population in Latvia is decreasing since 1990 when Latvia regained its independence from Soviet occupation. UN data reflects that Latvia is losing an average 1% of its urban population every year. The shrinking tendencies have been slowed down since 1990. However, in the first five years of its independence (1990–1995), Latvia was annually losing an average 1.35% of its urban population. Now (2015–2020), the predicted trend is in average 0.93% per year. According to UN, the rural population of Latvia is shrinking as well.

It is also observed that cities which had been used to face economic growth and inflow of population are refusing to accept the contrary reality of shrinking (Röschlau 2013). These cities are still tended to design their policies based on “growth tendency”, thus keeping up to illusory vision. In a way, the shrinking process carves out the urban centre, expanding suburbanisation (Pallangst 2010). The parallel modes of shrinking and growing creates “a donut effect” where the urban centre is under

pressure to fight with the consequences of outflowing population and business, while suburbanized areas are facing another type of challenges related to an increasing demand of public services and lack of infrastructure. Lima and Eischeid (2017) argue the suburbanisation request for more land consumption, for better housing conditions and qualitative infrastructure in terms of water supply, sewage, transport, education, health care and even leisure. In long term, suburban areas are offering better and better living conditions for the wealthier part of population with dominant single-family housing, while urbanized city is losing its image, identity, and a number of communal problems created by under-consumption of water supply, sewage and transport system.

However, a “donut effect” is affecting much more than simple relations between urbanized centre and suburban areas. In general, it affects public revenues, interest of entrepreneurs and shift of economic activities (Lima and Eischeid 2017). Business has a tendency to move where the people are. However, in suburbanized areas with dominant single-family housing, the new challenge is present. These areas are tended to be in opposition to large infrastructure projects which bring urbanisation. In Latvia, this trend exposed when the population of Marupe was against the construction of Rail Baltic to the Riga airport, expected to start in 2020.

Latvia, as other Central and eastern European countries, after 1990, was trying to catch up to Western models in politics, economy and administration. Such a rapid jump to the new era comes with negative side effects like closure of old soviet-type production plants and factories in cities, completely changing the economic structure as well as the communal structure. In this regard, Riga is facing the same transformation shock as any other city in the region dealing with the post-soviet urbanisation pattern (Bontje 2004). Some of the old industrial parts in Riga have been demolished to open space for the new shopping malls, while others are still labelled as “sluggish” and waiting for either demolition or revival.

Thus, the current tendencies of the shrinking Riga are putting pressure for city planners in search for solutions. From the planning perspective, there are several factors to be revealed—planning documents as an official source and the planning culture to struggle against urban decline. Urban decline is challenged by green infrastructure, ecological reinforcement and modern art zones where future construction goes in hand with demolition (Trapp 2013).

The city of Leipzig is known as an example of academic analysis for shrinking cities capable to design its development strategy to cope with urban decline. The strategy of Leipzig is based on adjustment of housing conditions and infrastructure to the current size of population where demolition pays a major role (Bontje 2004). Greening is one of the central elements here, as the city of Leipzig concentrates on greener environment after demolition, as a key to attractiveness (Bontje 2004; Trapp 2013). However, greening is not an alternative chosen by Riga for its future development. Vice versa, Riga is still hoping that administrative decisions and manoeuvres with tax rates may stop outflow of population.

4.3 Urbanisation in Latvia: Point of Departure

While discussing urban governance, capacity and size of cities become crucial indicators. However, in Latvia, urban governance is shaped by several factors, such as demographic challenges, concentration of capital and shrinking cities. So, in 2011, cities were comprising 1.1% of area of the country. However, these nine cities accumulated 51% of all citizens living in Latvia, 70.2% of all commercial activities take place in cities and 60.8% of municipal revenues were collected in urbanized areas (State Regional Development Agency 2012). This highlights the role of urbanized areas in developing Latvia.

For the capital—Riga—these numbers are even higher than for the other cities in Latvia. Riga has the highest number of population density (2300 person/km²) and the highest level of economic activity—approximately 74 economic active units per 1000 residents were registered in 2011 (State Regional Development Agency 2012).

For a comprehensive analysis of territorial development, Latvia has designed the index of territorial development consisting of several composite elements like (VRAA 2018):

- Number of economically active units (individual merchants and business units) per 1000 residents;
- Level of unemployment;
- Percentage of person at need and poverty;
- Total number of crimes per 1000 residents;
- Natural demographic movement per 1000 residents;
- Long-term migration per 1000 residents;
- Number of elderly people per 1000 residents;
- Incomes from personal income tax per person.

The index reflects statistical annual changes for each territorial unit. However, since it is calculated for cities and other administrative units (i.e. rural) separately, it indirectly reflects the level of urbanisation. According to the index of territorial development, Riga is ranked as a top territory where development is the highest.

The development phenomena of Riga are partly dependant from the areas nearby. Municipalities around Riga are classified like rural municipalities (in Latvian: *novads*, in English: *parish*), and they are at the top ranking according to the index of territorial development (Fig. 4.1).

Knowing the fact that Riga is a capital and the largest city in Latvia, interdependence between capital city and municipalities around is visible. However, the economic development of Latvia has led to a rapid construction boom of single-family housing in the municipalities around Riga, thus resulting in an increase of population in those municipalities (Fig. 4.2).

It can be eliminated that if such demand for a new apartment is maintained, the total growth of the loan portfolio of new housing can be seen, which an important indicator for a healthy economy is. The tendency has been stimulated by a number of factors since 2015, but mainly the most important factors are the need for housing,

Fig. 4.1 Riga and municipalities nearby, 2018. (Excerpt from the map on administrative division of Latvia. Ministry of Regional Development in Latvia)

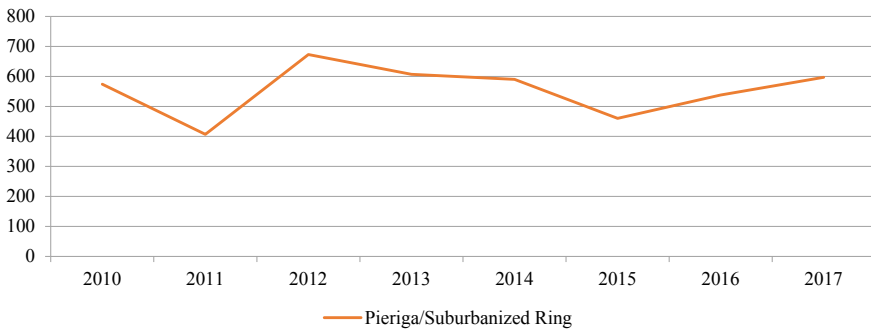


Fig. 4.2 Number of properties (one-room apartment) placed-in service, 2010–2017, in suburbanized ring municipalities [Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia (The data about placing into service new one-room apartment houses is only available from 2010)]

low-interest rates, bank flexibility in relation to the amount of the first instalment. Also, one can get support from the state, such as ALTUM, which is a state-owned financial institution, offers a lesser first instalment for the loan of new housing (only 5% from housing value, which in most cases is from 15 to 20% from housing value) (Hāka 2017). Most of the people from suburbanized ring municipalities choose to build new houses and live there, because of quality of infrastructure and environment, quality of housing there, and the accessibility of public transport to get to Riga (Hāka 2017) (Fig. 4.3).

The negative outflow of population growth rate means that Riga or municipalities included in this research of people moved away from those places. A lot of those

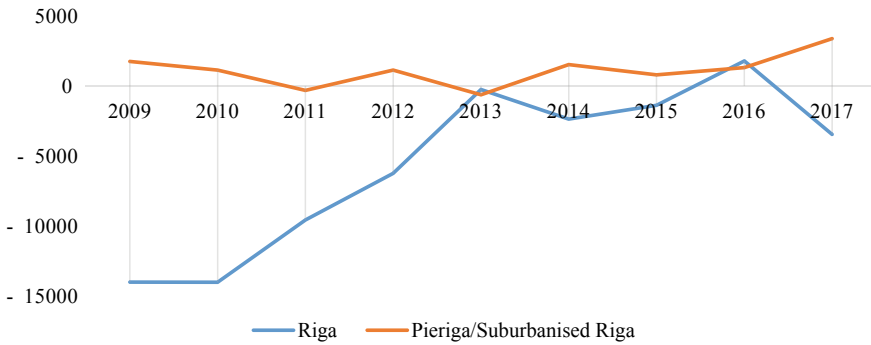


Fig. 4.3 Population growth rate in Riga and municipalities nearby (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia)

people immigrated to other countries when the financial crisis hit Latvia back in 2008. The negative outflow is well explained by the general trend of the people outflow in Latvia. From 2000 to 2016, the population in Latvia has decreased by 17% or from 2.38 to 1.97 million (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia).

The shrinking population of the city puts an additional burden on the municipal budget in the form of a reduction in tax revenues, making the city more dependent on its ability to attract other sources of funding, mainly EU funding (Haase et al. 2012). However, forecasted decrease in availability of EU funding puts even more stress on city planners regarding infrastructural development as city seems to be stay behind more and more (Fig. 4.4).

Despite the fact that Riga is facing an outflow of population, the general incomes for the capital are still high and increasing. This might be explained by the increase in the average gross wage and the minimum wage in the country after the financial crisis in 2008. The tax revenue not only includes the revenue from personal income tax, but also revenue from property tax. In Latvia, municipalities are only able to

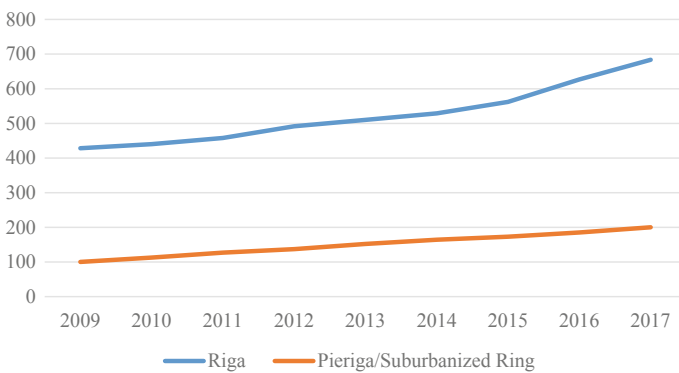


Fig. 4.4 Municipalities' tax revenue (in millions, EUR) (Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia)

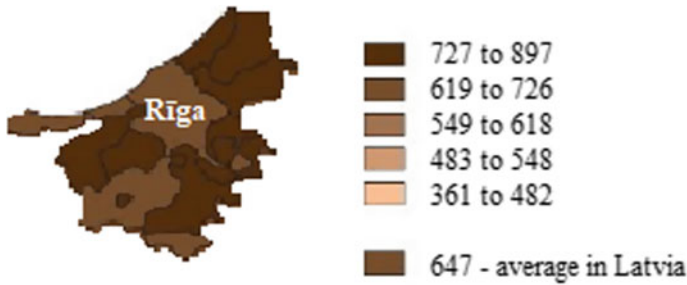


Fig. 4.5 Median of average monthly gross income by territorial unit (euro; 2017) (Hermanis 2019)

collect and determine the property tax, as there are no local taxes in Latvia, and all taxes (except property tax) are centrally collected and distributed. The property tax is determined by each municipality individually, and it can vary from 0.2 to 3.0% of the cadastral value of real estate (Law on Local Governments 1994).

Riga is looking for ways to increase personal income tax revenues, for example, by offering cheaper public transport tickets for people, who would officially be registered in Riga municipality, not in the suburbanized ring municipalities. Similar tactics have been used by the suburbanized ring municipalities, as they use various bonuses to increase the number of people living there, thereby having more in tax revenue. For example, residents of Jurmala (one of the municipalities from the suburbanized ring that is included in this research), in some cases, can have 90% real estate tax discount (Jūrmalas pilsētas dome 2013). Thus, although there is no observable statistical effect on tax revenues in Riga, the actual actions and information/development directions in sustainable development strategy indicate concerns related to the outflow of taxes to the suburbanized ring municipalities (Fig. 4.5).

The municipalities, which are included in the research, are an extension of Riga's economic geography. Some of the suburbanized ring municipalities are located close to the main highways and thus are a good place to build logistics centres. Take, for example, Marupe—the airport and the business cluster around it surrounds the municipality, which plays an important role in determining the average monthly gross earnings. One can also find shopping malls in suburbanized ring municipalities, which are in a strategically beneficial place, so the average monthly gross earning grows in them.

4.4 Planning Approach

Pallangst (2010) argues that the planning culture is embedded into the national planning systems. Thus, urban planning should be analysed in line with general principles of policy planning the country. At the same time, Pallangst (2010) points out that planning cultures are affected by Europeanization, as well as and internationaliza-

tion. Cooperation among cities and transfer of best practice are the most popular instruments for searching the inspiration.

The development planning of the Latvia is set out in the law “Development Planning System”. According to the law, all the planning documents should be mutually coordinated in order to achieve the objectives of the long-term conceptual document “The Model for Growth of Latvia: Human Being in the First Place”.

The sustainable development planning documents at the local level are subordinated hierarchically to the regional and national level development planning documents (Development Planning System Law 2008). Therefore, strategic documents of ring municipalities should be revealed in line with Riga’s strategic vision. Long-term sustainable development strategy and medium-term development planning document of the local governments of suburbanized ring municipalities are elaborated and implemented not only in accordance with the Riga county strategies, but also by assessing the territorial development documents of the neighbouring counties. The inhabitants of the counties can get involved in the development programs of the neighbouring municipalities if there are significant interests in these municipalities.

The “sustainable development strategy”, as a territorial planning document, was designed in 2011, in Latvia, as the main long-term development-planning document, under which development programs and spatial plans are formed. The development strategy is a long-term local government policy, vision and nevertheless marketing material that addresses existing and potential residents, entrepreneurs, guests of the municipality.

In general, sustainable development strategy of Latvia until 2030 has identified seven priorities: investment in human capital, paradigm shift in education, innovative and eco-efficient economy, nature as future capital, spatial development perspective, innovative governance and public participation and development of cultural space (Latvija 2030 2011) (Fig. 4.6).

The Riga Planning Region was established in 2006 according to Law on regional development, and it includes the cities of Riga and Jurmala with 27 municipalities

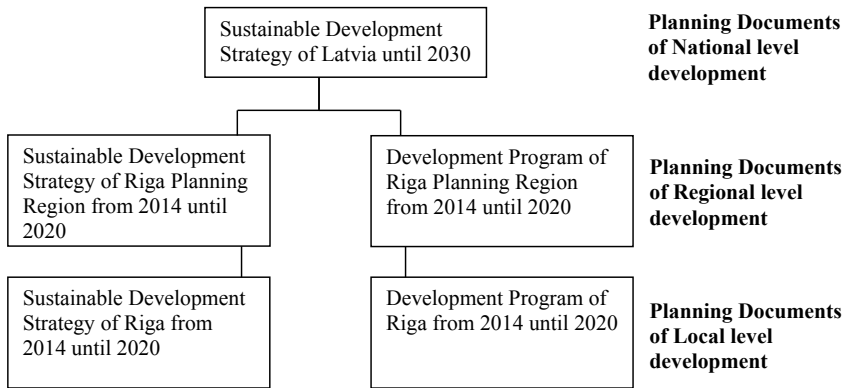


Fig. 4.6 Planning documents hierarchy in Latvia (created by authors)

(Riga Planning Region 2018). The planning region ensures regional development planning, coordination, cooperation between local governments and other public administration institutions according to its competencies. For example, additionally to planning, coordination, cooperation competencies it also evaluates and provides opinions on the mutual coherence of regional and local development planning documents, evaluates national level planning documents, and when finding non-compliance, proposes to amend the national level development planning documents or decide on amendments in the planning documents of region level. Within the scope of its tasks, the Riga Planning Region also performs additional functions with the aim of promoting the implementation of the priorities set in the development documents of all the municipalities included in this region. For example, one of them is the planning of the public transport system to Riga, as many people living in the suburbanized ring municipalities work in Riga (Riga Planning Region 2018).

The Latvian regional policy was changed after 2002 respecting each region having its own unique strengths and weaknesses impacting on development. Thus, the use of strength to overcome weakness was not only to inject a business-like approach, but also to support some sort of motivation and equality instrument for regions (Ministry of Regional Development and Environmental Protection 2013). The new regional policy expressed in the policy paper “On regional development 2013–2019” asserts demographic and ageing society challenges, and recognizes the role of urbanization in the development of regions (Ministry of Regional Development and Environmental Protection 2013, pp. 12–14). However, when it comes to the anticipated policy actions, the policy paper “On regional development 2013–2019” avoids to address urbanisation. Instead, the formal policy planning logic is based on cooperation between rural areas and cities, investment in regions to increase number of working places available and improved accessibility as well as development of the regional cities and towns as mini-urbanized units. It is expected that investment into regions and capacity development of the regions and municipalities will ensure equal development of all Latvian territories. At the same time, it seems that policy developers do not believe in the vision of equal development of all regions as they emphasize the international role of Riga as a capital city and as the main economic driving force. It is interesting to note that the performance indicator reflecting the role of Riga is the number of visits to multifunctional centres in Riga. Actually, the municipality expects that total number of visitors to different cultural and sport events will increase by 1.5 million in 2022 (Ministry of Regional Development and Environmental Protection 2013). An expected increase of visitors to centralized multicultural centres forecasts more congestion and concentration of people and cars in certain periods of time. This policy decision also includes a hidden message that the population in rural areas might be expected to receive a basic amount of public services, while Riga is and still continues to be the main national destination for culture, sports and even shopping.

“Development program of Riga 2014–2020” defines the strategic goals for Riga—to be an internationally recognized and relevant metropolis in the Northern Europe (Riga City Council 2014c). However, implementation actions of the strategic goal are more tailored to attracting tourists, rather than up taking the main responsibilities of a

metropolis with respect to suburbs and sublime territories. In the long run, looking at the development of Riga, there is the negative trend of population decline, which the municipality has also identified as the main challenge in the sustainable development strategy. Thus, the sustainable development strategy is at least formally pointing to the current importance of the depopulation issue in the long term.

Sustainable development strategy of Riga from 2014 until 2030 unlike the previous Riga sustainable development strategy puts and focuses on the spatial perspective of urban development. There is information about the vision of spatial perspective in the future, which includes graphics and descriptions of Riga in various fields and topics, including guidelines for further detailed spatial planning. It reflects population structure, transport infrastructure, engineering infrastructure, structure of natural territories, cultural, historical and landscape areas, as well as priority development areas and the most important spatial structure elements (Riga City Council 2014b).

In the making process of the sustainable development strategy of Riga from 2014 until 2030 and Development program of Riga from 2014 until 2020, public discussions were held, and 180 persons or organizations submitted 978 objections and suggestions for strategy and programs, of which 373 were taken into account and 166 were already included in the approved draft documents. Many suggestions from different kind of unions were taken into account (Riga City Council 2014a).

However, the phenomena of shrinking cities required a different planning culture as the city is facing different types of challenges. One of these challenges includes close cooperation with suburbanized areas (despite its legal status and administrative borders) requesting to establish such cooperation mode, where early shifts are identified by monitoring of basic data. Other challenges are related to overcoming the growth-centred planning approach (Pallangst 2010).

There are four cooperation opportunities for municipalities in Latvia: cooperation for protecting their common interests, cooperation for implementation of functions, cooperation for development of projects and cooperation as fellowship (Vilka 2014).

The cooperation for protecting their common interests is usually implemented through making and being in an association. Core organization for protection of common interests is the Latvian association of local and regional governments. In addition, there are associations, which cover narrower space, for example, there is an association between Riga's suburban municipalities.

Cooperation for implementation of functions cannot be seen as a public-private partnership (PPP), which is public and private sector collaboration, and is characterised by the collaboration between one or more public partners and one or more private partners. This kind of cooperation is needed to ensure societies the need for new or renovated buildings or public services. Usually, it is a long-term cooperation (up to 30 years or longer) (Central Finance and Contracting Agency of the Republic of Latvia (CFCA) 2018). At the moment, there are 70 PPP's contracts and 35 of them are working in the Riga planning region. Most of them are signed in renovation of housing, school and kindergarten building, assurance of public transport, and assurance of catering service (Ministry of Finance 2011).

Cooperation for development of projects can be seen, for example, when municipalities want to develop infrastructure, such a case was noticed between Riga and

Stopini municipality, when the building of IKEA shopping mall took place. Riga helped to arrange and build appropriate transport infrastructure to the mall (Riga City Council 2016).

Cooperation can also be seen as a fellowship which usually realizes as changing experiences between experts of the municipalities. Also, some suburbanized ring municipalities have their own union; for example, there is partnership between suburbanized ring municipalities—Marupe, Olaine and Babite municipalities, which is founded as a union of those municipalities. The partnership was founded on August 12, 2009, and aims to improve the quality of life of the inhabitants of those three municipalities through their activities by promoting sustainable rural development, which includes both economic and social activity growth, and improvement of the environment and sustainable use of resources. Its aims are to promote societies involvement in the development of the territory, coordinate and attract financial resources to achieve aims of this partnership and to improve collaboration between residents of those municipalities and state institutions (Biedriba “Pierigas partnerība” 2018).

There is also a union “City for the people”, which was created in 2016 in order to promote a good urban environment implementation in Riga and other Latvian cities. This organization’s goals are to promote a people-oriented, quality public outdoor space where everyone would be safe and comfortable to stay, a convenient and safe movement possibilities inside and outside the city, public health importance (Pilseta cilvēkiem 2016). The team of this union consists of architects and city planners so they offer their view of how to plan transport infrastructure in Riga and other cities. They attract society’s attention to ill-considered decisions made by municipalities. As a result, some initiatives made by this union have been taken into consideration in the municipalities.

4.5 Strategic Vision of the Municipalities: Where to Go

The review of municipal strategies includes the vision set out in the sustainable development strategy as well as long-term priorities.

Looking at the 10 municipalities¹ that were included in the study, it can be concluded that the phrase “improving the quality of life” was included in most of the visions found in the sustainable development strategies of municipalities. Also, the other two most used words/phrases were “infrastructure” and “assurance of business place” and its development.

By improving the quality of life for the people living in municipalities, the emphasis is put on a wide variety of possibilities that the municipality is offering for people;

¹These 10 suburbanized ring municipalities are Jurmala, Adazu novads, Babites novads, Carnikavas novads, Garkalnes novads, Kekavas novads, Marupes novads, Olaines novads, Salaspils novads and Stopinu novads.

for example, that they have different kind of choices for activities after work, or offering different types of housing, and with qualitative and diverse services.

It is important for the municipalities around Riga to improve their infrastructure and not only an accessible, qualitative transport infrastructure, but also an innovative transport infrastructure. Ensuring appropriate transport infrastructure is necessary for population employed in the capital, but permanently living in suburbs.

As mentioned in the introduction, business has a tendency to move where the people are. However, as most of the municipality areas are with dominant single-family housing, they need to attract more entrepreneurs so that they would ensure more revenue in the municipal budget.

In the sustainable development strategy of Riga, emphasis is also put on cooperation between municipalities that are around the capital city. In the sustainable development strategy of Riga and all the 10 strategies of municipalities, the scopes that are mentioned as priorities and are one of those which are important for all the municipalities and in which they want to cooperate are public transportation and road infrastructure, environmental protection, educational, culture and social services.

Only some municipalities (Salaspils municipality, Stopini municipality, Carnikava municipality) have included assurance of “green” life or mentioned environmentally friendly infrastructure in sustainable development strategy. These municipalities are next to each other, and this environmentally friendly idea may be included because they have a coordinated approach as they are in the Riga planning region. For example, Salaspils municipality supports making green structures in the city, and with it meaning making environment greener, greener places for people to escape the city rush. Also, Salaspils municipality (2013) will support green energy implementation in the municipality. Stopini municipality also has stated that there is a need to promote and maintain energy efficient and environmentally friendly housing and technology and also, to preserve the forest, which is named as the “green lungs” of Riga (Stopinu novada dome 2013). The forest areas around Riga belongs to the city and serves as a green belt around the city that improves the microclimate, reduces environmental pollution and provides recreation opportunities for residents (Riga City Council 2014b). Carnikava municipality has even put “live green” in its slogan, and priorities in its strategy also cover themes such as assurance of environment preservation, recycling and cultivating one’s own products, vegetables (Carnikavas novada dome 2014). Apparently, it is significant to coordinate strategies of municipalities around Riga, because they also have an important role in assurance of healthy environment around it.

Any municipality should understand what is it that residents would actually want to see there, and most importantly, what is it they want to use. Therefore, there is a difference between just building assets (swimming pools, bike paths, roads, concert halls) and their usefulness. A municipality cannot include all the development program ideas into the strategy and carry them out just to see that no one is using the utility and hope for the investment to be justified as someone will use it in the future (Fig. 4.7).

It is evident that municipalities from the suburbanized ring want to attract people to live there as the non-financial investment rises there. However, a negative tendency

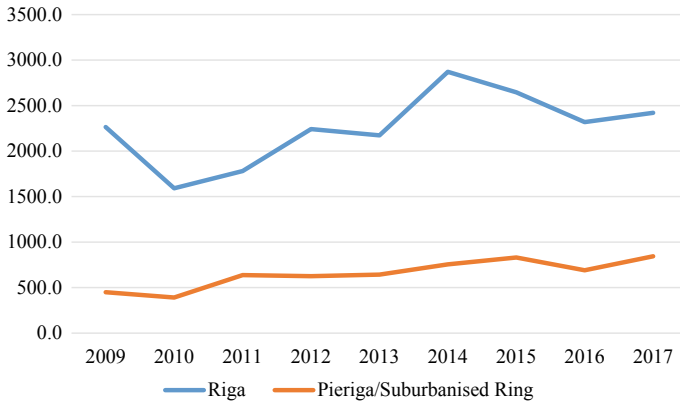


Fig. 4.7 Non-financial investment in statistical regions (comparative price levels in 2017, in millions) (Central Statistical Bureau)

for Riga is that non-financial investment has decreased since 2014, and it is not rising up fast enough. It is needed to start to have more non-financial investments in Riga, in places that would ensure more accessible new apartments for middle-class families, because most of them choose to live in the suburbanized ring, as the house or apartment would cost the same as in Riga (Helmane 2018).

Analysing the shrinkage processes in Riga, it is visible that the city only partially corresponds to the manifestations of a “classical” shrinking city. Several shrinkage processes fail, and the overall decline in the city is assessed as moderate. One of the explanations is the role of Riga as a capital city. Riga has positioned itself more extensively as the Baltic or North European metropolis in its planning documents (Riga City Council 2014b). However, Riga needs to provide a lot of activities that are in line with the interests of Latvian residents, entrepreneurs, and be an administrative, economic, cultural and educational centre, as well as a major transport hub. Despite the fact that Riga is shrinking and the trends continue to be negative, it should be taken into account that the shrinkage process is also linked to negative demographic changes at the national level. Riga is shrinking and will continue to shrink in the near future, but as the capital of the country, it attracts and will continue to attract people from the regions. Thus, the problem of shrinkage is more significant and has more severe consequences in the cities of the regions.

4.6 Governing Urbanisation

However, the relations between Riga and “ring” municipalities are not unilateral. Besides numbers of population outflow and investments, there is another dimension to reveal. First, the outflow of population along with decreasing general population pushes municipalities for innovation ways to attract more residents. Some municipal-

ities are building their attractiveness strategies on better quality services, developed infrastructure and participatory budgeting, while Riga is building its strategy purely on administrative measures. In this case, municipalities apply an increased rate of property tax if nobody is declared as a permanent resident in the property. The difference is rather visible. In an ordinary case, at least one person has declared the apartment as a permanent living—the rate is around 0.2–0.6% of cadastral value (Riga.lv 2015). Since 2016, Riga decided to charge 1.5% of the cadastral value from the owner of the apartments where nobody is declared.

Reasoning for such a decision is related with a “fight” for more residents in the administrative territory since the main source of income for municipalities is the personal income tax, while the personal income tax is centrally collected and distributed to municipalities according to number of residents declared themselves in the municipality. At the same time, the property tax is the only tax where Latvian municipalities have limited room of manoeuvring regarding applicable tax rates. All other taxes and their rates are centrally set by the government, thus Latvia is one of the few countries in EU not having “de facto” municipal taxes. Since, a person can be declared as a resident only in a single municipality, the municipalities are using property tax as an economic tool for attracting citizens. Nevertheless, many more municipalities now are following Riga and apply increased tax rates.² However, the law gives discretion for municipalities to set a tax rate between 0.2 and 3% (Latvijas Vēstnesis 2018). According to the Latvian Ministry of Regional Development, any tax rate between 0.2 and 1.5% is the basic rate and 1.5% is the maximum allowed ceiling for the tax rate (Latvijas Vēstnesis 2018). From the wider policy perspective, municipalities are tended to keep the tax rate as low as possible to keep up an image of a “budget-friendly” municipality. The rate is calculated based on the cadastral value, which is partly linked to the market value of the property. Despite the complicated formula for calculation of the cadastral value of the property, there is a tendency that the cadastral value is slowly increasing in urbanized and newly constructed buildings, while in rural areas it the same or increases in minor. Discretion for municipalities to set the tax rate is a trap, also, since a lower rate can attract residents, while a too high of a rate can frighten them away. From the other perspective, every municipality is striving for a higher number of permanent residents as an income source. Thus, manoeuvres with the tax rate reflect desperate actions to balance municipal budget, to attract residents and to provide services.

In short term, such policy decision ensures incomes in the municipal budget, while in long term, it has negative consequences over density of population in rest of the country and ensures more outflow of population as residents decides to live and declare themselves in the municipalities capable to offer more public services. In the long-term perspective, manoeuvres with the tax rate might lead to segregation of municipalities making the rich even richer, while the poor municipalities would be pushing towards unpopular financial decisions and lack of capacity to implement tasks prescribed by the law.

²For example, these municipalities are Limbazu novads.

Another tool providing benefits for municipal residents, also implemented by Riga, is the “Riga card” (in Latvian: *ridznieka karte*). The card was introduced in 2016 with an initial idea that the holder of the card, as a resident of Riga, receives substantial discounts for public transport, public parking and discounts for services and also products of some private sector companies (Rīdzinieka karte 2018). However, the private companies offering discounts with the card are not the market leaders and rely more on the residents of Riga as the main client group. In addition, the holders of the card might also receive discounts for healthcare services provided by hospitals and healthcare clinics, where the Riga municipality holds shares. The Riga municipality foresaw that its residents will receive the card free of charge, while residents of other municipalities can purchase the card for 775 EUR per year (Lūka 2016). By the end of 2017, there were around 440,000 card users, but none from outside of Riga. No citizens decided to purchase the card privately. However, the mayor of Riga explained that price 775 EUR per year was expected to be covered by the “ring municipalities” if they would want to provide better quality services for their residents (LSM 2016). According to the mayor, the “ring municipalities” are wealthier than Riga, since they have more income per resident, so they can afford to cover the price of card.

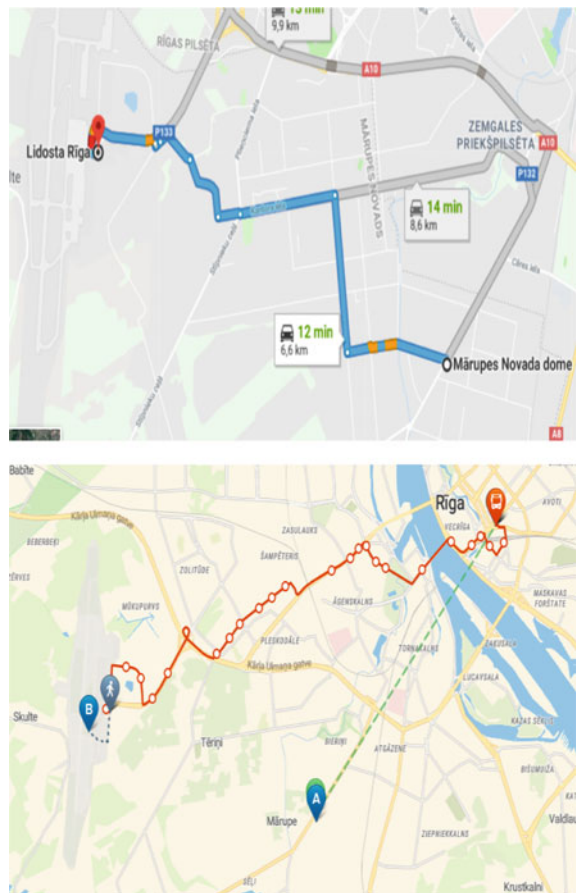
The Competition Council, the competition watchdog in Latvia, expressed its opinion that the “Resident card” of Riga municipality is limiting free competition in the sphere of public parking. In this case, the Competition Council argues that holders of the card receive a discount for public parking only if they use parking services delivered by enterprise belonging to Riga municipality with electronic accounts linked to Riga card (Konkurences padome 2018). This approach discriminates residents as they are forced to use public parking space operated by the municipal company and other public parking providers since they are not offering their services within framework of the Riga card. In fact, the Riga card not only provides extra benefits for residents, but also it provides extra income for municipal enterprises by violating principles of the free market. Based on the decision of the Competition Council, the Ministry of Regional Development has asked the Riga municipality to change the rules of the Riga card to ensure equal treatment of all public parking providers in summer of 2018 (Konkurences padome 2018).

The administrative borders of Riga and the municipalities do not reflect borders of communal services and infrastructure. The public transport in Riga and the ring municipalities also reflects a centre-oriented approach. The majority of routes of public transport (bus, train) in Riga and the municipalities are organized in such a way that it delivers population to Riga and back. There are limited public transport routes connecting the ring municipalities. Therefore, the population is forced to spent long time in public transport that passes city centre. Centre-directed public transport routes together with congestion of private transport highlights low capacity of both: Riga municipality and the ring municipalities to address issues at the new level of governance. Local political fears on taking on responsibility for decisive policy actions on public transport issues as a part of the new urbanized agenda on putting the development of public transport in a more downward spiral—inconvenient routes, less passengers and less income (Stead et al. 2010). Already a decade ago, the Riga

municipality was already facing congestion as a side effect of an inflow of population from regions and ring municipalities as a part of everyday mobility. However, Riga seems to be rather weak on lesson learning as several urbanisation-related actions failed—no park and ride, no centre diverted transport routes, no unified tickets for municipal public transport and trains crossing Riga (Fig. 4.8).

For example, the Riga airport, as a major transport hub, offers a free bus for its employees living in the ring municipalities, as this substantially saves travel time for employees and, at the same time, makes the airport as more attractive employers (International airport Riga 2018). Just for comparison, if an employee lives in Mārupes municipality and starts his/hers journey to work in the airport by the private car, he or she would spend 12 min.³ At the same, if the same person would rely on public transport, the travel passes the Old Town of Riga and lasts for at least an hour.

Fig. 4.8 Comparison of routes between different types of transport modes (<https://www.google.com/maps/> and <https://www.1188.lv/>)



³The time is calculated by google maps in the route: Daugavas iela 29 at Mārupes novads to the international airport Rīga.

4.7 Conclusion

Statistical data highlights that Riga is facing numerous challenges. Despite outflow of population Riga is still capable to ensure growth of its budget. However, rule of economy works against Riga, as average salary in Riga is going down pressuring business and labour investigate more profitable conditions. At the same time, its planning approach still does not capture modern challenges to be accepted and included in the everyday routine. The transport routes are still centre-oriented, and latest innovation (like a residence card and property tax) is slowing down inevitable trend of Riga to become an empty circle of “donut”.

Looking at the Riga planning documents, it is observed that the consequences of the decrease in population have been identified. By 2030, the city is planning a major growth effort to reduce the negative demographic trend. The information contained in the document suggests that a large-scale growth is planned; but at the same time, in Latvia, by 2030, the population is expected to fall, so the plan with large investments can be considered as risky. At the same time, there is a desire to move towards a compact city, thus avoiding the threat of urban-wide decentralization, which, in a declining urban environment, would lead to a disrupted urban structure, inadequate use of infrastructure and, in certain areas, lead to even greater population density. Likewise, the focus on development in degraded or “sluggish” areas, which, in a context of shrinkage and associated brownfield growth, contributes to the sustainable use of areas and the reduction of the effects of shrinkage.

Meanwhile, the suburbanized ring municipalities included in the research are not only an extension of Riga’s economic geography, but also play an important role to ensure qualitative microclimate around the capital city. Due to these reasons, it is significant to coordinate growth strategies of municipalities around Riga. However, coordination of growth strategies is still a lesson to be learned. Shrinking cities is a multidimensional phenomenon embracing many economic and social factors. For Latvia, this phenomenon has a political component as well. However, there is no coherent urban development strategy comprising all areas—Riga and its suburbs. Instead, there are dozens of local development plans focusing on short-term benefits to be provided by each single municipality around Riga. Mergers of local municipalities might be an umbrella to force administrative units for a larger scale planning. Again, since the merger is strongly dependent from political promises, this seems to be an unpredictable future.

Unfortunately, until Latvia will face outflow of population, the problem of shrinking Riga would stay without solutions. However, decreasing population in Riga and a transfer of economic development to places around Riga, is a window of opportunity to balance the economic development in Latvia, allowing other small towns to grow. Even, this requires considerable policy coordination efforts where the ministry should take the leading role.

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Part II
Region-Making and Metropolitan Areas
in Multi-level Agendas

Chapter 5

Multi-level Deal-Making: Challenges and Opportunities for Scottish City Regions



Arno van der Zwet, Julie Clark, Damian Dempsey, Sophie Mamattah and Hartwig Pautz

Abstract Deal-making is becoming an increasingly popular way to coordinate policy implementation between the local and central level. The analysis of the design and implementation of City Region Deals in Scotland provides a unique insight into some of the challenges and opportunities which this type of mechanism encounters. This chapter focuses on the multi-level tensions between the local, regional and central levels of government in relation to the development process and implementation of City Region Deals. It frames the analysis along four interrelated dimensions: polity, policy, programming and politics. Although City Region Deals are a policy framework that was initiated by the UK Government, the Scottish Government has had a significant influence on the way the deals are designed and implemented in Scotland. From a bottom-up perspective, deal-making has offered Scottish local authorities considerable political leverage to extract resources and support from both the UK and the Scottish governments. At the same time, deal-making within a multi-level environment has presented local authorities with considerable capacity challenges, and although the deal-making rationale has originated from a place-based understanding of urban economic development—culminating in highly technical agreements that are bureaucratically led—the chapter demonstrates that political expediency remains a key factor in the design of the deals.

Keywords Urban governance · Urban development · Deal-making · Multi-level policy-making · Scotland

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5.1 Introduction

By focusing on ‘City Region Deals’ (CRD) as examples for urban and local development policy in Scotland, this chapter offers a unique perspective into the potential tensions within multi-level development agendas. The contractual arrangements called ‘City Deal’ (CD) in England and Wales and ‘City Region Deal’ (CRD) in Scotland were first introduced in the UK in 2011. Negotiated between the UK Government and local authorities, they were to be ‘bespoke packages of funding and decision-making powers’ (Ward 2017: 3). Initially, City Deals were confined to England but, in 2014, the first Scottish CRD¹ was agreed. By the end of 2018, six CRDs had been signed, in regions anchored by Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Stirling, the ‘Tay Cities’ of Dundee and Perth, and Inverness.

The introduction of the CRDs in Scotland has created to a multi-level policy framework which requires close vertical coordination between the UK’s central Government in Westminster, the Scottish regional Government in Edinburgh, and local administrations, as well as horizontal coordination with a broad range of societal actors. No doubt, then, that CRDs have presented those involved with distinctive challenges, as well as opportunities, for Scottish urban centres and their surrounding areas. The chapter considers these challenges and opportunities by framing its analysis along four interrelated dimensions that affect the way in which CRDs are designed and implemented in Scotland. First, the term *polity* captures the constitutional and institutional framework of the UK and the way in which administrative responsibilities at different levels impact CRDs. Second, from a *policy* perspective a multi-level environment means that there are competing policy frameworks, objectives and narratives in place that effect the way in which CRDs are developed and implemented. Third, the *programming* dimension captures capacity, monitoring and learning issues that are linked to the development and implementation of CRDs. Fourth, although CRDs are highly technical agreements that are thrashed out at a bureaucratic level, the *politics* of CRDs are also an important feature.

The evidence this chapter draws from comes from a research project carried out as part of collaborative work between the University of the West of Scotland and Oxfam Scotland, conducted in 2017/18. After opening with an overview of how CRDs are conceived and implemented, the chapter presents an analysis that draws from a review of academic and ‘grey’ policy literature, as well as from an in-depth analysis of CRD documents, particularly their final agreements. A series of semi-structured interviews, conducted with key stakeholders in summer 2018, adds further depth to the analysis by offering insights in terms of multi-level polity relations, the policy frameworks in which CRD are embedded, programming issues and the politics of CRD-making. The chapter closes with observations on the tensions of this specific example of a multi-level deal-making approach in Scotland and places them in an international context.

¹City Deals were also introduced in Wales in 2016, and by early 2019, a City Region Deal was being negotiated in Northern Ireland.

5.2 City Region Deals: A Short History

City Deals were introduced in the UK in 2011 under the coalition government of Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties (2011–2015). The purpose of this approach was to facilitate place-based economic development, taking into account endogenous growth factors (Atterton 2017), and to underpin the UK Government's devolution agenda. Regarding the latter, City Deals were to allow local areas to:

- take charge and responsibility of decisions that affect their area;
- do what they think is best to help businesses grow;
- create economic growth; and
- decide how public money should be spent (HM Government 2013).

The legislative basis for City Deals is the 2011 Localism Act (HM Government 2011b) which sets out the possibility for local authorities to submit plans to the UK Government on how to promote local economic growth. If successful at this first stage, local authorities are invited to negotiate 'bespoke' deals with central government. From the perspective of Nick Clegg, then Deputy Prime Minister, the deals were 'to empower cities to forge their own path, to play to their own strengths and to find creative solutions to local problems'. The approach recognises that 'every city is different. So we are moving away from a one-size-fits-all model towards individual city deals' (HM Government 2011a).

In England, between July 2012 and August 2014, 26 deals were agreed. Most of the English deals have a strong urban focus, although some of them also have a regional dimension (Ward 2018). In Scotland, the first CRD was signed in August 2014 with Glasgow–Clyde Valley becoming the first area outside England to agree a deal. Subsequent deals were agreed in 2016 for Aberdeen, and Inverness and Highlands; in 2017, a deal for the Edinburgh and South East Scotland region was agreed, and in 2018, deals were agreed for Stirling and the Tay Cities of Dundee and Perth.

One of the prerequisites for the UK Government agreeing individual deals is that participating local authorities make a commitment to reforming and strengthening local governance mechanisms. In most cities, the deals have led to local stakeholders agreeing shared growth objectives and refining how they present these to the Government. Some cities have developed single appraisal frameworks that help them prioritise capital investments against strategic objectives (National Audit Office 2015). The precise shape of each deal depends on the needs and opportunities of each locality. Although primarily geared towards capital developments (National Audit Office 2015), the deals cover a range of policy areas. Amongst these are infrastructure investment including broadband; site reclamation; commercial development; job creation; employability and labour market initiatives; skills and apprenticeship development; and funding of small- and medium-size enterprises. Furthermore, deals may involve arrangements for regulatory change or the relocation of public agencies to facilitate the growth of 'clusters' of related businesses (National Audit Office 2015).

City Region Deals in Scotland cover several local authority areas and, as such, establish or reinforce cooperation across administrative boundaries, encouraging

a more functional and place-based approach to local economic development (see Table 5.1). For example, the Glasgow City Region Deal includes eight local authorities, making it the most geographically complex Scottish CRD. An important distinction between Scotland and England is that, in the former, there is strong support for the policy to provide full geographical coverage. The idea of including regions and not ‘only’ cities in the deals reflects a preference for linking rural areas with conurbations. Ultimately, CRDs together with Growth Deals—which cover the more rural areas in South-West Scotland and the Borders region to England—aim to incorporate the whole of Scotland. The strongest example of this is the Inverness CRD which includes the large rural expanse of the Scottish Highlands and its remote islands. Upon the insistence of the Scottish Government, the Stirling CRD incorporates the small, largely rural local authority of Clackmannanshire. The Tay Cities CRD, likewise, incorporates large rural areas, as does the Edinburgh and South East Scotland CRD. In fact, despite the high number of local authorities involved, the Glasgow CRD—having been the first Scottish arrangement of its type—remains the only one in Scotland which covers a largely urban territory. In this respect, the Glasgow CRD is similar to most English City Deals. For the most part, the Scottish deals retain an emphasis on supporting cities and their connectivity to rural and peri-urban areas.

In addition to funding from the UK Government, Scotland’s devolved government, local authorities as well as other actors provide significant core funding to the CRDs. In the case of Scottish CRDs, the Scottish Government at least matches UK Government funding and in some cases has exceeded it. Local authorities generally contribute smaller amounts than central and regional governments. In several cases, organisations such as universities, government departments and agencies, or housing associations have contributed directly to CRD budgets as regional partners. However, much of the funding involved in CRDs is not ‘new’ money. Rather, the budget is drawn from existing funds that have been repackaged or funding that has been devolved from central government to local authorities (EPRC 2016). The scale of funding provided by different levels of government also differs considerably. The Glasgow CRD is, financially speaking, the largest in Scotland and commands a £1.13 billion budget. The Edinburgh deal is, at £1.1 billion, only somewhat smaller but is constituted by significantly more funding from the participating local authorities and universities. In most cases, the UK Government’s and the Scottish Government’s financial contributions to the deals are roughly equal. Exceptions are the Inverness and Highland CRD to which the Scottish Government has contributed 2.5 times more funding than the UK Government. In the case of the Tay Cities CRD, the Scottish Government initially committed £50 million more than the UK Government but increased its contribution to £100 million in January 2019. The Scottish Government added an additional £5 million to the Stirling CRD in the very final stages of negotiation (BBC 2018).

Table 5.1 City Region Deals in Scotland

City Region Deal	Number of local authorities involved	Approval date	Total value (£ million)	UK government contribution (£ million)	Scottish government contribution (£ million)	Regional partner ^a contribution (£ million)
Glasgow city region	8—East Dunbartonshire Council, East Renfrewshire Council, Glasgow City Council, Inverclyde Council, North Lanarkshire Council, Renfrewshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council and West Dunbartonshire Council	August 2014	1130	500	500	130
Aberdeen	2—Aberdeen city council and Aberdeenshire council	January 2016	355.5	125	125	105.5
Inverness and highland	1—Highland council	March 2016	315	53	135	127

(continued)

Table 5.1 (continued)

City Region Deal	Number of local authorities involved	Approval date	Total value (£ million)	UK government contribution (£ million)	Scottish government contribution (£ million)	Regional partner ^a contribution (£ million)
Edinburgh and South East Scotland	6—City of Edinburgh, Fife, East Lothian, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian	July 2017	1101	300	300	501
Tay cities	4—Angus, Dundee, Fife, Perth and Kinross	July 2018	350	150	250	TBC
Stirling and Clackmannanshire	2—Stirling and Clackmannanshire	May 2018	223.2	45.1	50.1	128

Source Authors' analysis

^aIncludes local authorities, universities, colleges, direct private sector funding

5.3 Multi-level Relations: The Complex Nature of CRDs

As the discussion of history and nature of CRDs shows, this development policy is based on a pronounced and explicit multi-level framework. The deal-making process itself emphasises not only the necessity for vertical but also for horizontal relations between all actors involved in the design and implementation of CRDs. Such complex relations can result in tensions or even conflicts. In order to identify any possible multi-level tensions, the following discussion is structured along four interlinked analytical dimensions—polity, policy, programming and politics. These dimensions allow an understanding of the CRDs within the context of existing governance structures in Scotland and the identification of the precise sources of tensions.

5.3.1 Policy: Shared Responsibilities

The asymmetrical nature of the UK's constitutional settlement has been a long-standing feature of the British state: the different constituent parts of the UK have different relations with the centre and different responsibilities for policy implementation. Scotland has had its own governing institutions since the Act of Union in 1707. Despite increased centralisation of powers in Westminster, these have continued to exist in modern times. The Scottish Office, which is responsible for implementing UK Government policy in Scotland and for providing Scottish representation in the cabinet (Mitchell 2003), has provided the basis for institutionalisation of multi-level relations in Scotland since 1885. The 1998 devolution settlement and the establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 have strengthened Scottish distinctiveness in many policy areas. While England has remained a highly centralised state in terms of economic development policies (Pike and Tomanay 2009), Scotland (alongside Wales and Northern Ireland) has obtained extensive competencies in policies related to economic development. These include education and training, the environment, housing, land and planning, and some aspects of transport policy. More recently, Scotland has also gained some responsibilities in areas such as social policy and taxation. Although the devolved nations' expenditure in relation to economic development policy has been limited, it is nevertheless important as it informs the wider policy agenda of the Scottish Government (Cooke and Clifton 2005). However, many policy areas related to urban economic development remain reserved, meaning that the UK Government retains competency in these areas. Reserved areas often have a strong economic dimension, including benefits and social security, employment, equal opportunities, immigration, and trade and industry. Hence, economic development (including urban development) remains a shared responsibility between UK and devolved governments.

At the UK level, the CD/CRD policy framework has to be seen within the context of the highly centralised nature of England as a polity; the policy essentially stems

from a desire by the UK Government to change the relationship between central and local actors. O'Brien and Pike (2015: 14) note that 'City Deals are reworking the role of the UK state internally at the national and local levels and through changed central–local and inter-local (city-regional) relations'. The idea that cities must be willing to shoulder their fair share of risk if they are to be rewarded with new freedoms was married with the view that, in order to unlock their growth potential, 'local leaders in core cities will need to work effectively across their economic footprint' (HM Government 2011a). The policy means significant changes to how public services are delivered and to accountability for large amounts of taxpayers' money (HCCPA 2016: 9). In return for devolved powers in Manchester, for example, a mayoralty has been instituted investing strategic and budgetary authority and responsibility in a single individual (Gains 2015). However, this rebalancing of central–local relations should not be regarded as a hollowing-out of the state (Rhodes 1994; Jessop 2013). Instead, the state retains a pivotal role in strategic planning. Conceptually, this particular form of localism has been defined as 'spatial liberalism' (Clarke and Cochrane 2013) and has its origins in communitarian forms of civil society activity. This new form of localism is constituted by an uneven shift from local government to local governance which increasingly involves a large variety of private, public and third sector actors at different spatial scales in local decision-making processes (O'Brien and Pike 2015).

There are a number of distinct aspects to the deal-making process in Scotland. First, it is important to note that the desire for rebalancing local–central relations mainly relates to England and not to Scotland, where local government is a devolved competency and therefore outwith the remit of the UK Government. In Scotland, CRDs have not led to any changes in terms of local devolution of powers, and the election of a mayor has not been a requirement for Scottish cities securing CRDs. A further dynamic in Scotland, and a contrast to England (but not to Wales and Northern Ireland), is that the deal-making is made more complex by the additional relationship between local authorities and the Scottish Government on the one hand, as well as the relationship between Scottish and UK Government on the other hand.

The investment in Scottish cities from the UK level is an important driver for the Scottish Government to support the process, and in all cases, the Scottish Government has matched or exceeded UK funding commitments to the CRDs. There is no legal requirement for the Scottish Government to provide match funding, but the political context (see section politics) would make it very difficult not to contribute. Yet the triangular relationship between central, regional and local government partners in Scotland can cause tensions in relation to the deal-making process in the sense that the Deals have to link to a further set of policy and strategic frameworks.

Despite this complexity, CRDs have also provided Scottish cities with a more direct access point to the UK Government. This is potentially a very significant development. After all, it can be argued that since devolution, the relationship between local authorities and the UK Government has weakened. Instead, the Scottish Government has replaced some of the central functions previously carried out at the UK level. Considering that certain policy areas reserved to the UK Government are important for local and urban development, Scottish local authorities can be argued to be somewhat disadvantaged in comparison to their English counterparts as their rela-

tionship with London is to an extent mediated by Edinburgh. CRDs could become vehicles for change in this respect—although this may be more of an unintended consequence rather than a deliberate governance strategy by the UK Government.

At the same time, City Deals require input from many different governance agencies and organisations at the institutional level. The Scottish institutional landscape in relation to economic development is dense: the urban agglomerations covered by CRDs operate in multi-scalar geographies in which policy areas related to urban development (e.g. transport or education) are implemented and managed through institutions that cover variable functional territory. Such institutional density can be considered to have a positive impact on economic development as it builds capacities at multiple levels. However, it also presents local actors with some challenges. One interviewee summarised the situation, noting that

things just get lost in the huge quagmire of Scotland’s governance arrangements.
(Interview 1)

In other words, the variable nature of the polity and the operation of policies at different spatial scales can be the source of significant coordinating challenges for urban actors.

5.3.2 Policy: Diverging Growth Strategies

The introduction of CRDs in Scotland in the UK has given rise to considerations regarding the potential disjunction between the local, national and regional policy agendas. As Scottish CRDs receive funding from both the UK and Scottish Governments, it is important that the deals ‘speak’ to policy agendas at both levels. However, linking local strategies to both UK and Scottish development agendas is not without its challenges. CRDs are designed and implemented in a dense and constantly shifting policy environment. Over the past decade, UK and Scottish economic development policies have been diverging in terms of their aims and objectives. The UK, first under the coalition government of Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties and subsequently under a Conservative Government, has continued to follow a more traditional economic growth agenda with a focus on GDP growth. The Scottish Government has adopted an economic development agenda based on what it refers to as ‘inclusive growth’. It defines this as ‘growth that combines increases in prosperity with greater equity, creates opportunities for all and distributes the dividends of increased prosperity fairly’ (Scottish Government 2015: 1). In England, urban authorities have had little difficulty establishing the primary objectives for economic growth: ‘for many agreed UK City Deals, it is clear that the primary focus has been on increasing jobs and GVA, with distribution being principally reflected in the spatial arrangements of capital projects’ (Waite et al. 2017). However, in Scotland the divergence between UK and Scottish policy is apparent in the development of CRDs:

what has been interesting about [CRDs] is they really began as an English mechanism. They were seen very much as in a traditional economic growth sense. ... their evolution in Scotland

has been quite different. ... And the main difference has been around the inclusive growth agenda, which of course is a Scottish Government initiative. (Interview 2)

In particular, it has also been noted that the UK Government's focus on productivity metrics may present tensions for the Scottish Government's inclusive growth agenda. The UK Government's emphasis on productivity could be seen as damaging for regions characterised by relatively low employment and wage rates. This could potentially limit the scope for developing projects that emphasise labour market inclusion if creating such jobs does not also increase GVA. Thus, there may be a risk that this emphasis could compromise inclusion from a labour market perspective as it reinforces spatial disparities between regions which already have high productivity/high-wage labour markets, relative to those which have lower productivity/lower-wage labour markets.

However, the divergence between Scottish and UK Government objectives should not be overstated. Scotland is not unique within the UK in terms of its understanding of economic growth. There are also several English cities that have developed strategies around the idea of inclusive growth. Nevertheless, the definition of 'inclusive growth' is fuzzy and vulnerable to criticism as simply a buzzword. However, Lee (2018) notes that the Scottish Government's definition of inclusive growth is one of the sharpest and, as one interviewee remarked:

the UK Government is committed to growth and there is less emphasis [on inclusive growth], they would probably say if you asked them they'd say "yes of course". But it's not in the top line of their agenda, whereas for the Scottish Government it is on the top line of the agenda. (Interview 3)

Nevertheless, some interviewees noted that there remains a lack of clarity in terms of the operationalisation of the concept in the context of CRDs and that

there is a process of helping the Scottish Government to develop the concept. (Interview 3)

All in all, the divergence between UK and Scottish policy vis-à-vis economic development could mean that CRDs in Scotland have conflicting goals to satisfy UK and Scottish Government objectives. This would lead to issues of coherence and limit the cumulative impact of CRD as a strategy. Furthermore, it may be the case that in a selection process, some of the projects are not selected because of the division of responsibilities. In other words, potentially projects that do fit the Scottish inclusive growth agenda but are related to reserved areas may not receive support because they do not reflect UK priorities and vice versa.

These issues are further complicated by considering the temporal dimension of CRDs. They are designed to span development activities over two or three decades and are therefore subject to continuous adaptations in order to align to emerging policy frameworks. However, in their genesis CRDs were linked to existing economic growth agendas, as discussed above. The extent to which strategies and projects need to be 'retrofitted' therefore depends on when they were adopted. Importantly, the Scottish Government Economic Strategy (2015), which sets out its vision for inclusive growth, was agreed in 2015 after the first Scottish CRD (Glasgow and Clyde Valley) had already been agreed. Establishing a coherent strategy in such

circumstances can be challenging and several interviewees mentioned the need for retrofitting of projects and programmes of already-agreed CRDs to a new policy context. In those cases where CRDs were agreed later, this was less of an issue. For example in Stirling

just by dint of timing really as a deal, ... we were in the right place at the right time for that ... we didn't really have to retrofit it. (Interview 2)

However, also in cases where strategies were still under development there were concerns that the Scottish Government's focus on inclusive growth may mean that some CRDs might support sectors that are important for traditional economic growth but may not relate sufficiently to inclusive growth.

5.3.3 Programming: Capacity, Monitoring and Learning

CRDs are highly complex arrangements that rely on detailed knowledge of development issues. Developing them requires capacity at the local and central level. The CRD agreements do not make any financial provision to local authorities for assisting them to developing their management capacities. Rather, it is expected that local authorities 'will pool their resources to manage deals at a city-region level, consolidating people and skills across several local authorities' (National Audit Office 2015: 9). However, it is not clear that pooling resources will effectively address any gaps in capacities which emerge as a result of changes to work practices within local authorities as a consequence of entering into a CRD. Capacity at central level is also limited, and the 'bespoke' deal-making process requires considerable resources (Jones et al. 2017; O'Brien and Pike 2015). The fact that CRDs were developed in the aftermath of the financial crisis which led to severe cutbacks and staff reductions in many government departments further complicates this situation so that, on occasions, CDR negotiations have been delayed by constrained finances and reduced staff capacity. In the context of Scotland, the deal-making process also requires double negotiations with UK and Scottish Governments. The additional resourcing and pressure this puts upon local government are problematic:

Not only are you having to deal with the UK Government and their requirements ... You're equally dealing with the Scottish Government, and their policy requirements—as I've already mentioned—have a different focus. (Interview 2)

The negotiations

can be a bit of a minefield with the neighbourhood plans and regional plans and city plans. And then you've got Scottish, UK, other development plans to take into account. It's asking a huge, huge burden of its staff. (Interview 4)

The second, but related, issue is that CRDs are more regionally focused than most of their English counterparts which according to some interviewees causes financial capacity issues. The extension of City Deals to include this more regional dimension

has, amongst some interviewees, raised concerns that the approach is being hollowed out and that

the jam is spread too thinly. (Interview 9)

In other words, there is not enough funding available for a genuine urban development policy. Third, it is questionable that this approach can continue to be viable in the context of austerity. Many of the administrative and financial capacity issues should be seen in the context of the UK Government's ongoing austerity agenda which has significantly reduced local authorities' overall budgets. One interviewee notes that

given the financial austerity that's going on within local government ... you cannot underestimate the pressures that local government are under. (Interview 1)

In this context, the CRD process

feels like another thing that's kind of grafted on top of everything else they've got to do, and I'm very alive to the fact that, ultimately, it's these officers that are gonna be accountable to their chief executives, to demonstrate that their council, or their city region deal partnership, is actually delivering on this agenda. (Interview 1)

All in all, staffing, financing and resourcing both at the local, regional and central level can be a significant issue.

Monitoring and oversight are an important part of assessing the progress and success of CRDs. However, some concerns have been raised that the deal-making approach does not have an overarching monitoring and reporting framework. This can make it difficult to aggregate results and assess the impact of the policy (O'Brien and Pike 2015). As CRDs differ significantly from each other and are often intertwined with other policy initiatives, each CRD requires a monitoring framework that is sensitive to its own needs. While local authorities have developed methods for monitoring the impacts of some individual deals, without consistent indicators or shared definitions around key measures across all deals, assessment of their impact is particularly challenging (National Audit Office 2015). In particular, as a consequence of the emergence of inclusive growth as a key concept in Scotland, 'technical issues arise in defining and choosing what indicators should be used to appraise inclusive growth, and whether and how they can be applied in the monitoring and evaluation of CRDs where future funding is at stake' (Waite et al. 2017). In that vein, some interviewees argue that CRDs create issues in terms of accountability:

Who's responsible, where's the oversight? And who's taking that pan-Scotland overview? (Interview 1)

Other interviewees noted that some stakeholders had encouraged the Scottish Government to establish a common monitoring framework for inclusive growth from the outset:

Right at the outset of the process the Cities Alliance suggested to the Scottish Government perhaps there should be a common approach across Scotland. (Interview 2)

However, this has proven difficult because each CRD is unique. Instead, stakeholders responsible for implementing the CRDs have undergone an iterative learning process (i.e., learning is taking place whilst deals are being implemented) in terms of how to establish indicators and monitoring frameworks.

In response to some of these issues, the UK and Scottish Governments have set up a high-level Scottish City Region Deal Delivery Board (Scottish Government 2018). It is, amongst other things, responsible for ‘the oversight, monitoring and successful implementation of current Scottish City Region Deals, including the effective monitoring of performance, outcomes, budget, risks and other issues relating to the programme, in accordance with best practice and any recommendations issued by auditors, Audit Scotland or the National Audit Office (NAO)’ (Scottish Government 2018). It also provides a mechanism for ‘appropriate escalation and advice through both Governments should major issues arise’ (Scottish Government 2018).

Although there is no formal pan-Scotland framework for sharing experiences, an element of ‘cross-deal learning’ is evident as CRD teams from different cities are in regular conversation with each other. For example, in the case of the Tay Cities CRD, the interviewee notes that

we have looked at what’s been put in place at Aberdeen in particular, we have got a good relationship with Glasgow and we’ve looked at Manchester. We’ve had some conversations with colleagues in Edinburgh. (Interview 5)

In particular, larger and more advanced deal have taken a lead role in setting indicators so that later (and often smaller deals) can learn, adapt and synthesise these experiences. A second element in this learning process involves research that has been undertaken by NGOs that have interest in promoting inclusive growth. For example, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has supported the development of an inclusive growth toolkit which allows ‘places to assess the inclusive growth outcomes of interventions or investments, placing inclusivity at the heart of decision-making’ (Metro Dynamics 2018). As these toolkits and ideas emerge after the approval of the CRDs, there is an element of retrofitting them to strategies.

Finally, there are also concerns in terms of the shared responsibilities of the UK and Scottish Governments and what impact that may have on monitoring requirements. As the CRDs in Scotland have to answer to both UK and Scottish policy frameworks, there are questions of overlap and dual reporting. The following interviewee expects that

the UK Government are still very much in those traditional economic indicators, whereas the Scottish Government, it’s going to be something that looks quite different. (Interview 1)

This links back to capacity and resourcing concerns where local actors may have to dedicate additional resources and staff to meet both UK and Scottish Government requirements.

5.3.4 *Politics: Establishing Narratives*

CRDs are technical policy deals that require a high level of involvement of bureaucrats and experts. At the local level, they often have a galvanising effect in terms of gaining cross-party political support. However, the development of CRDs is not isolated from the wider political context. Scottish CRDs are not only multi-level in terms of policy. They also have a multi-level politics perspective. Over the past decade, Scottish politics and policy have been strongly influenced by the debates about Scotland's future in the UK. The Scottish National Party (SNP), which has governed Scotland since 2007, in 2011 won an outright majority of seats in the Scottish Parliament and was able to progress its agenda of leading Scotland into independence. In 2012, the UK Government and the Scottish Government agreed the terms of a referendum on Scottish independence to be held in September 2014. The next two years saw intense campaigning by the SNP for a 'Yes' vote, while the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and most of the Labour Party argued for Scotland to remain in the Union. In the end the Scottish electorate voted against independence, but the continued electoral success of the SNP (in 2016 it was once again the largest party in Scottish Parliament) has shaped the relationship between the UK and Scottish Government. On the one hand, both Governments have worked constructively together, as the SNP wishes to demonstrate competence in office (Wright 2014). On the other hand, constitutional politics tend to spill over into a wide range of policy areas, including CRDs. The following discussion shows this.

The first Scottish CRD—the Glasgow City Region Deal—was agreed in August 2014 and ought to be seen against the background of the Scottish independence referendum. One interviewee states that

the Glasgow deal was put together so quickly for ... reasons that were much to do with politics. (Interview 6)

The agreement of the deal so shortly before the referendum has certainly led to speculation that the UK Government used the Glasgow CRD and the associated funding to influence the outcome of the referendum and demonstrate that the UK Government provides effective support for cities in Scotland (McColm 2014). Glasgow may have secured a CRD eventually, but there is at least a perception that it did so because of the political circumstances:

the only reason Glasgow really got the deal at the time was: both the Scottish Government and the UK Government were desperate to do something positive ahead of the referendum. (Interview 6)

Glasgow interviewees note that negotiations on the Glasgow CRD started as early as the summer of 2012 (Interview 7). However, for many policy actors that were involved in urban development outside of Glasgow, the announcement of the Glasgow CRD came as a complete surprise:

It was announced from nowhere, days before the independence referendum. (Interview 5)

This perhaps reflects the secretive nature of the deal-making process which has led to some concerns about transparency and accountability of deals (Tomaney 2016).

Waite et al. (2017) note that in Scotland, the localism agenda which in England was associated with a strong push for more responsibilities to be exercised at the urban level has had to compete with the constitutional debate about reserved and devolved powers. Since Scottish devolution in 1999, the relationship between Scottish local authorities and Westminster is thought to have weakened. Many Scottish cities were of the opinion that they were not able to get the same access to UK Government as their English counterparts. Furthermore, there is a long-term trend towards centralisation of policy responsibilities of Scottish local authorities since devolution (McGarvey 2012). Several interviewees note a desire for more devolved powers for local authorities in Scotland, but one interviewee explained that

there is a reluctance in the Scottish Government to devolve much below the Scottish Government level that isn't already enshrined in the local government legislation ... [and] ... at the moment there has been limited appetite to devolve powers to the City Deals. (Interview 5)

Nevertheless, CRDs have some potential to change the power dynamics between local authorities and Scottish Government. First, CRDs provide a direct access point to UK Government departments through which Scottish cities can compete for resources and influence policy at the UK level. Second, CRDs provide local authorities with some leverage over both the UK and the Scottish Government. To an extent, both can be played off against each other in order to obtain larger funding commitments. For example, one interviewee recalls numerous

phone calls with cabinet ministers from the Scottish Government trying to get the UK Government to match what the Scottish Government was prepared to put in. (Interview 8)

Third, CRDs have introduced a more place-based development focus in Scotland which takes into account local development needs and puts more emphasis on local actors. Yet, at the same time, each of the political parties will aim to claim ownership of the deal—or at least part of it—as their policy

I think some, a lot of this is about branding, about saying, “We, the Scottish Government.” Or, “We, the UK Government.” Or, “We, Glasgow City Council” are bringing these new projects and ideas and City Deals and it's really exciting and interesting. (Interview 4)

In other words, the more place-based approach and integrated nature of the CRDs do not override political expediency.

Party politics at the local level also plays an important role in the multi-level relations between local authorities and the Scottish and UK governments. Certainly, many CRDs are agreed with cross-party consensus, for example in Stirling where for the

city region deal we got cross-party support. Everybody could coalesce around it. And that's ... that's a rare thing in politics. And ... and of course, that's because you had a Tory-led UK Government, an SNP-led Scottish Government, and at that ... and at that time, we were a Labour-led council. (Interview 1)

However, in the case of Tay Cities CRD, it was noted that

the stars were probably more aligned when we started this process, because all three of the Tayside councils were SNP-led administrations. (Interview 5)

Nevertheless, as this interviewee described, changes in political control of a local authority may not only alter the priorities in terms of economic development at the local level, but they can also lead to changes in the relationship between local authority and regional or central government at a political level. For example, in the 2017 local election the local administration in Glasgow changed for the first time in 37 years from Labour to an SNP minority administration. As the SNP is also in office at the regional level and sets the economic development agenda, it can be expected that the CRD will show greater alignment to the Scottish Government's economic strategy.

5.4 Conclusions

The analysis of Scottish CRDs highlights significant tensions within this multi-level urban/regional development policy vehicle, relating to polity, policy, programming and politics. First, considering polity, the City Deals policy is a UK policy initiative that has been deployed by the UK Government to support Scottish urban regions. When implemented in England, City Deals cover a large number of devolved policy matters, for which in Scotland the Scottish devolved administration is responsible. However, in these circumstances the Scottish Government becomes a policy-taker, as it is to an extent coerced into following the UK policy approach of deal-making, despite being, at least partially, responsible for policy competences in economic development matters. In order to secure UK funding for Scottish cities, the Scottish Government is also being asked to allocate its own funding to the Deals. On the other hand, the analysis demonstrates that despite this fact, the Scottish Government has been able to shape the deals through its own economic agenda. Ways in which Scottish policy differs from the rest of the UK include more focus on rural–urban and peri-urban connections and an emphasis on the concept of inclusive growth. It is significant that Scotland's inclusive growth agenda emerged whilst negotiations over deals were underway with some local authorities and one deal had already been approved. This meant that emerging and existing deals had to be retrofitted to Scottish Government policy frameworks. Furthermore, despite calls from UK-level politicians to extend the decentralisation agenda to Scotland, the local devolution agenda that has underpinned City Deals in England has not been transferred to Scotland's CRDs (Cramb 2015). Therefore, CRDs can be regarded as more traditional economic development programmes—albeit with significant local inputs—without the potential of unlocking growth potential through governance reform.

Second, deal-making as a policy approach to local development in a multi-level state results in considerable challenges, but also in opportunities for local authorities. On the one hand, local actors are asked to engage with multiple government departments at Scottish and UK levels, as well as to demonstrate that their strate-

gies links to both UK and Scottish economic development policy objectives. The need to respond to diverging policy agendas has the potential of causing tensions in the CRD design process. Additionally, deal-making requires capacity and resources which are particularly problematic in the context of austerity and government cut-backs. For many local authorities, resources are scarce and the additional pressures of designing, implementing and monitoring highly complex multi-level deals which require coordination across multiple local authorities and consultation with wider socio-economic partners poses considerable challenges. One of the implications of the highly individual and somewhat secretive nature of the deal-making process is that the opportunities for cross-deal learning are limited.

Nevertheless, local authorities can use the deal-making process to attempt to extract more funding from both UK and Scottish Governments. Given that politicians at the UK and Scottish levels are of different party political persuasions and both want to be seen as supporting CRDs and claiming the deals as theirs, there is an opportunity for local actors to maximise support. This has to be seen against the background of ongoing constitutional debates in Scotland which compel the UK Government to proactively support Scottish cities. For the SNP, it remains important to demonstrate competence in supporting the economy if it wishes to successfully pursue its goal of an independent Scotland. In this context, negotiations on CRD are not only informed by functional needs of the territory and resource availability but also political expediency at the central and regional level which provides opportunities for local authorities to maximise their bargaining power.

From a more international perspective, transactional mechanism approaches such as contracts, agreements or deals for policy implementation are becoming increasingly popular (EPRC 2016). France has a long history of contractual arrangements linked to the decentralisation of specific tasks to regions, departments, and to some extent, municipalities over the last three decades (OECD 2007). In 2014, a new law for city and urban cohesion was introduced. The law particularly targets deprived areas Urban Contracts (*Contrats de Ville*) and aims to bring together actors and policies to address complex urban problems, including housing, jobs, environmental challenges, social inclusion (EPRC 2016). The Netherlands has recently adopted a city deals approach as part of its New Urban Policy (*Agenda Stad*). This approach differs considerably from that in the UK as it takes the form of cross-urban networks that are negotiated in relation to a certain policy area. They should focus on innovative solutions that cover social or economic issues in urban areas (EPRC 2016). Also, European Cohesion policy has adopted a contractual approach in the form of integrated sustainable urban development strategies. These strategies are negotiated between urban local authorities and managing authorities, usually at the regional or national level and are informed by an overarching European strategic framework.

Generally speaking, contractual arrangements dovetail ideas of endogenous growth and place-based development (Barca et al. 2012) which support the idea that, although centralised policy frameworks may inform and set out principles of urban and local development, their implementation requires a more place specific approach in which local knowledge plays a key role. Yet, the highly technical and often secretive nature of deal-making approaches raises important questions of which

actors are involved or excluded, which values are represented, and what knowledge is employed in the development and implementation.

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Chapter 6

The Politics of Making Regions—Competitiveness and the Re-/Presentation of Territoriality in Europe—The Cases of the International Øresund (Greater Copenhagen) Region and the Capital City Region Berlin-Brandenburg



Tassilo Herrschel

Abstract This chapter discusses the challenges for political legitimacy posed by the focus on, and role of, cities in framing national and regional, and, increasingly, global, economic development and opportunities. By rising above their respective territorial contexts as they shape and join networks that reach far beyond, cities highlight and reinforce unevenness in opportunities, lifestyles and ambitions, as well as perceived relevance in political processes and governance practices. This inequality broadens with growing mismatches between the mainly urban ‘winners’ and the less fortunate prospects for non-urban areas. Those may feel increasingly peripheralised and ‘left behind’ by opportunities and ‘voice’ in political–economic decisions that seem dominated and shaped by urban-defined interests. Two examples are presented here to illustrate the challenges posed by the intersection of—and mismatch between—city and city network spaces with hazy borders on the one hand, and conventional state-defined territories with fixed, clear administrative borders, on the other. Both regions, the Øresund Region (now Greater Copenhagen) and the Capital City Region of Berlin-Brandenburg, also include distinct administrative boundaries. Important for the argument here is the existence of a ‘gap’ between the two types of geographic entities—selective, network-defined economic opportunity spaces, and the suggested comprehensive territorial equality of interest representation in a democratic state.

Keywords Regionalism · Metropolitan networks · State territory · Democratic legitimacy · Network spaces · Borders · Peripheralisation

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6.1 Introduction

Cities, especially larger metropolitan areas, have become the main foci, drivers and manifestations of a now nearly four decades' old neoliberal competitiveness agenda in the wake of a dominant globalisation discourse. The political ramifications of continuous casting of the limelight on the 'urban', while implying the acceptance of non-urban areas as in the shadow of interest and opportunity, are now becoming starkly evident. Sassen's (2002) argument about World Cities and their relational networks of almost 20 years ago provided one of the early pointers to that increasingly metropolitan/city. As sub-national economic policies needed to move beyond the established 'comfort zone' of the state-territorial arena on which regions exist as subdivisions of the state, they increasingly faced more ambitious: locally described and thus anchored, yet less fixed and border-limited, networks of shared interests and agendas. And cities are the primary nodes and connectors in these networks which inherently are self-selecting and thus essentially 'elitist'.

The central question in this chapter is about the interconnection, or 'anchoring' (Flint et al. 2009), between fluid network-defined space and fixed state territory. Yet, the ways in which this 'anchoring' can work vary between particular circumstances as operational context. And this is shaped by the interaction of intra- and extra-city-/regional factors. The two examples presented here illustrate this complex inter-relationship between fixed state-administrative territoriality and network-projected variable 'backcloth spatiality'. The first case explores how the conventional, administrative Skåne region engages with the discursively constructed Danish-Swedish trans-border economic space of the the Øresund Region/Greater Copenhagen. The second case, meanwhile, investigates policy responses to the contrasting economic prospects between the inner part of the Berlin-Brandenburg region adjoining to Berlin and the outer ring.

In other words, how do imagined and actual geographies interact in both cases? For instance, what about the contrast between strong metropolitan centres with their distinctly international outlook, on the one hand, and, on the other, the more region-focused perspective of the rather sparsely populated, rural hinterland 'rest region'? How do resulting tensions, including even resentment, between very different views of local-regional relations and the role of the state get responded to? While the main metropolitan centres, be that Copenhagen, Malmö, Lund or Berlin, increasingly pursue their own policies to boost their individual internationally competitive interests/ambitions, such localism is viewed with suspicion, or even disdain, by the smaller, rural municipalities in these centres' wider regions. Their capacity to act independently is much more constrained, because they are more dependent on the traditional scalar hierarchy of state structure and the allocation of resources, be that by the region or the state as a whole. As became evident from discussions in the two regions, especially in the the Øresund Region, these more peripheral municipalities feel abandoned and 'left behind' by what they see as self-interested metropolitan agendas and politics (see also Herrschel 2018) that seem to care little about the respective wider region's needs.

6.2 Reconciling Territorially Defined Regional Belonging and Legitimacy of Policy with Opportunistic Network-Based Regionalism

Globalisation-driven pressure for greater visibility and thus enhanced competitiveness has pushed cities and city regions as increasingly dominant players nationally and internationally (Herschel and Newman 2017). Discussions about World Cities (Sassen 2001; Thornley and Newman 2011) first highlighted the growing importance of cities in the evolving globalised economy that went beyond established notions of cities as sub-national actors, operating within national parameters. Places like London, New York and Tokyo have long moved beyond those confines (Sassen 2001). Their interests and actions created new relations and networks that embraced the world and went beyond what many states could mobilise. At the same time, national and sub-national economic policies, following the dominant neoliberal narrative of the economic gains from individual competition, moved away from a conventional focus on the state-territorial nature of regions as containers for state policies. Instead, the concept of ‘new’ regions, first developed for collaborations between nation-states (Hettne et al 1999), gained popularity. Applied to the intra-national scale (Keating 1998; Harrison 2012), its main characteristics are being locally described as a product of inter-local collaboration and derived network relations. Such ‘new regions’ are therefore inherently variable and thus deemed to be more responsive to changing opportunities and challenges for local areas. Yet, inevitably, given its network-derived character, participation and effects are selective: Those places that gained roles as ‘hubs’ on these networks will be able to exercise more influence on the network’s agenda into benefit their own individual local interests, while those bypassed, will see their opportunities and relevance—visibly—curtailed. They are, effectively, marginalised.

Conceptually, this shift has been taken on board by the debate around ‘new regionalism’ (Söderbaum and Shaw 2003; MacLeod 2001; Harrison 2012; Jonas and Pincetl 2006; Keating 1998), where claims are made about ‘re-territorialising’ the state to ‘match’ (governmental–administrative) structure with (economic) process through new state spaces (Brenner 2004). Nevertheless, geography still matters, as confirmed by Doreen Massey and John Allen (Massey and Allen 1984). After all, powers, responsibilities and principles of democratic representation continue to be territorially defined through particular characteristics such as political cultures and *modi operandi*. The growing spread of the ‘new regionalism’ debate (Doidge 2016; Söderbaum 2016) reflects that distinction. The ‘newness’ rests in the virtual nature of projecting such ‘soft spaces’ (Walsh 2012, 2014) as strategic and discursive spatial entities circumscribed by opportunity-driven collaborative relations. It is the shared interest, however long it lasts, which defines form and relevance of such notional entities, rather than institutionalised fixed territoriality.

Two quite different cultures of ‘regionalism’ thus meet and intersect with differing degrees of congruence and thus ‘gaps’. Crouch (2004) sees in this development an inherent threat to democratic principles per se and thus a *de facto* shift towards a

post-democracy. And current populist challenges to democratic states on the basis of representing the ‘left behinds’ of globalisation, or the French *gilets jaunes* protestations, illustrate this. As networks are about power games (Agger and Löfgren 2008), participation—or non-participation—in those reinforces existing patterns of inequality of interests that matter and those that do rather less so. By its very nature, such unevenness, with in-built dynamics reinforcing such inequalities, are in principle contradicting the notion of area-based planning with its attempt at reconciling competing interests and bringing about a ‘win-win’ outcome all round. Variations in actor engagement define new linkages on the basis of shared interest. There is no automatic participation by mere association, such as through sharing the same formalised territory as occupied by a network member. Purposeful engagement is necessary to become part of a network space of growing ‘relational complexity’ (Heley 2013). No longer is there an all-inclusive ‘safety net’ of contiguous territory, which relies on the success of individual places—cities and city regions.

Much of such tension revolves around the growing de facto discrepancy between the geographic dimension of the city network-defined Øresund region as a ‘virtual’ international space of economic opportunity promoted around the new Øresund Bridge as very visible symbol of the new connectivity that allows to project the Øresund region as one entity—irrespective of national differences in administration and *modi operandi* between the Danish and Swedish parts. Copenhagen, as the by far largest metropolis of the whole political concept of the Øresund region as one economic space, clearly dominates. Its interests in their new Swedish hinterland have understandably focused on the cities along the Swedish coast across the sea, rather than the rural interior of Skåne region. For Region Skåne, by contrast, the region is a territorial ‘container’ to deliver centrally state-defined and funded services equally to all residents, especially health care and education. Such implicit distinction between a more successful, dynamic urban network region in the east of the region, and a rather more stagnant and ‘distant’ rural interior and eastern part, is, unsurprisingly, considered politically problematic. Even though these differences reflect underlying geo-economic realities, they do not sit easily with the political claim of equal representation and voice in a democratic state and equal living conditions and public service provision.

Such politically challenging intra-regional differences in opportunities also affect the second example. The so-called Capital City Region of Berlin-Brandenburg represents a generalised positive regional image that differs quite significantly from the territorial reality of that same region. The image advertised for Berlin-Brandenburg as capital City Region obscures the fact that there are two federal states involved with considerable structural differences—metropolitan Berlin and largely rural ‘backwater’ Brandenburg—separated by a significant administrative border. The uneven balance in this virtual merger is indicated in the name Capital CITY Region, with the city (Berlin), just as in the rebranded Greater Copenhagen region, clearly the accepted primary focus. Yet, politically, such unevenness and inequality in opportunity—and democratic voice—are highly contentious, as it goes to the bedrock of representative democracy (Schlozman et al. 2012). Whose interests are, eventually,

represented—those of the economically successful city population, or those of the seemingly economically less potent rural hinterland region?

As we can see in the rising populist challenge to democratic principles, and in the grassroots people's movement of the *gilets jaunes* in France, for instance, the competitiveness-driven inequality has become politically highly contentious. But even before then, publicly admitting that equal representation and consideration of people's interests across a state territory is no longer the official credo would have been politically highly questionable. Instead, as in Berlin-Brandenburg, actually existing and self-reinforcing inequalities between a strong core of the Berlin city-region, and an economically structurally and developmentally much weaker peripheral ring, have been re-represented in strategic planning statements and documents to give a more harmonious image. Thus, for instance, while the strategic development plan of 2006 for the federal state of Brandenburg, surrounding the independent city state of Berlin like a doughnut, clearly depicted a de facto two-speed Brandenburg region (GLBB 2006, see also GLBB 2004). By contrast, much less such core-periphery separation was evident in later versions (GLBB 2009), as sectors and generous depictions of 'flows' to farther away metropolitan centres prevailed.

This changed representation of the territory aims to diffuse likely political tensions in the face of the implied acceptance as fact of inequality in development prospects across the state territory. Instead, the state now appears as a single cohesive entity with equal access to no more two-speed prospects. Instead, a single space of hubs and sweeping flows is presented (SSU and MIL 2012; GLBB 2009), where flows reach across the state territory in different directions and within and across its borders to places well beyond Brandenburg and Germany. The suggestion seems that all places have comparable access and opportunity. Again, as in the Øresund case, political expediency—facing growing political repercussions by the places and people feeling 'left behind' (see e.g. Burghardt 2018) drives the narrative.

The conventional view—and related policies—presuming that state territories can be simply subdivided into territorial regions as static geographic 'containers', no longer matches the growing role of new spaces of competitive opportunity' that are shaped by economic relations and interdependencies. Instead, the image has taken hold of 'flows' of globalising capital and associated opportunities cutting across territorial boundaries. Yet, such flow-based opportunities are highly selective and available only to those who manage to 'tap' into these flows. In this, 'World Cities' (Sassen 2001; Thornley and Newman 2011), for instance, are places that really do matter, because they act as nodes in this relational arrangement, attracting diverse interests and thus fundamentally shaping networks and relations of opportunities.

The EU's Lisbon Agenda of 2000 acknowledges these shifts, pinpointing cities and city regions as 'drivers' of European economic competitiveness in a global setting (EC 2014, p. 9). The current 2014–2020 Cohesion Policy continues the narrative of a strengthened 'urban dimension' of Europe's structural policy. Policies have thus sought to straddle the potentially conflictual agendas of continuing conventional agenda of integration through greater developmental (economic) cohesion and a much greater emphasis on global economic competitiveness. This involves a shift in

focus from peripheral, mostly rural ‘lagging’ areas to successful metropolitan areas as the ‘best horses’ in the competitive race with clearly defined individual policy agendas of pushing own economic advantage. Following neoliberal trickle-down argument, the rest of a state territory is to benefit from metropolitan success as a matter of course (Gordon 1999, p. 1001).

Network-based ‘togetherness’ is inherently more individually selective and thus exclusive than territorially based belonging, with only some actors acquiring the role as nodes to define and shape interactive networks and the projected background space. Being linked to those nodes means inclusion and participation in the respective networks of shared interest, policy decisions and envisaged opportunities. No longer is the mere position within a pre-defined territory sufficient to decide on ‘inclusion’ and participation alone. And so, what such city-centric relationality implies is an effective selectivity about who plays a part in the relational flows and connected nodes, and who does not. In other words, while conventional *territoriality* is holistic and cohesive and comprehensive, in that it encapsulates everyone within clearly defined borders and boundaries in the same way, e.g. political representation, network-defined *spatiality* is inherently more exclusive, individualistic and competitive, and much less clear in its operation from an outsider’s perspective.

The question then is how cohesive, conventional territory and selective, fragmented network spatiality relate to each other. Rather than being mutually exclusive, both are, in effect, complimentary. They are both needed for their particular characteristics and functions, administrative and governmental representation and legitimation on the one hand, and variable, opportunity-driven collaborative engagement, on the other. If mismatched, ‘white spots’ will denote areas that are either not underpinned by ‘territorial structures’ and thus remain essentially virtual spaces of non-institutionalised, informal and, in principle, open-ended connectivity (relations) (see also Jones 2009). Or, static territorial entities are not included in functional relations and linkages and thus, effectively, excluded from such processes and, as a result, peripheralised. And this may undermine their viability, such as through population loss as a result of emigration to the cities (Seibert 2008).

Unevenness in opportunity, development prospects and ‘standards’ thus becomes a de facto accepted *modus vivendi*. Inevitably, as a shadow effect, such urban-centric individualism results in a ‘crowding out’ of non-urban and non-participating places, territories and actors, who are not part of the main urban actor networks and thus effectively marginalised (peripheralised), including ‘outlying’ towns and cities (Kühn and Sommer 2013; Kühn and Lang 2017). The outcome is a complex, continuously revised and rearranged self-organising web of opportunistic inter-relations and connections, as reflected in the concept of governance. And this contrasts with conventional, state-centric territorial approaches to governing.

In such arrangements, hierarchy and complementarity of interests matter for shaping interest-based collaborative relations. The seemingly contradictory agendas between competitive individualism and collaborative engagement—albeit to boost individual opportunities—encourage a continuous search for new responses to overcome the inherent conflictuality. This includes scope for actors to join, leave or regroup in pursuit of their changing interests and circumstances, thus producing

shifting ‘geographies of centrality and marginality’ (Paasi 2006: 194) as a consequence. Perceived individual benefits for each of the network members resulting from engaging in any collaborative arrangement are the primary drivers of building relations.

Not being part of such an ‘operational web’ (Healey 1999) of like-interested linkages threatens to reinforce existing relative exclusion and/or marginalisation. Such may be understood as failure to ‘make the grade’ for being able to join an opportunity-driven network of similar types of actors who all seek to gain an equal slice of the expected growing collective ‘cake’. It is important, therefore, that each participant is considered as adding to that ‘cake’, before being allowed to join such a self-arranging governance ‘regime’ (Mossberger and Stoker 2001). The inevitable result is a growing inequality between ‘winners’ and ‘losers’, or, expressed perhaps less populist, successes and strugglers, as the strong seek to team up with the equally strong, leaving the weaker behind. Scope, capacity and capability to do something about being part of new initiatives to boost development opportunities will thus vary, reflecting the particular political–institutional and statutory frameworks of local/regional actors.

Against this individualising development of opportunity, the following two examples look first at the ways in which representation of territory through functional and policy spaces—the projected ‘backcloths’ to relational connections mentioned above—is tied to administrative territories: (1) the relationship between the Øresund Region as example of virtual ‘spatiality’, and the actually existing conventional administrative territoriality of Region Skåne in southern Sweden as part of the hierarchical multi-level state. (2) Then, there is the case of the discursive political project of Capital City Region Berlin-Brandenburg. This points to the geographic discrepancy between the spatial concept of the propagated ‘capital city region’ as one shared (and seemingly joined) strategic planning space, and the administrative reality of the many administrative divisions at federal state level between Berlin and Brandenburg and at municipal level especially in Brandenburg.

The ‘gap’ between the two geographies—fixed political-administrative territoriality and dynamically changing virtual spatiality—may thus work both ways: in the Swedish case, formal, institutionalised governmental territoriality is being challenged by an economic opportunity-driven urban network space in the western, urbanised part of Skåne, now visibly under the tutelage of Copenhagen. Rebranded as Greater Copenhagen and thus quite unashamedly admitting the leading role of the metropolis in economic competitiveness and opportunity, the opportunities considered attached to an internationally recognised city compete with the traditional vies of state-hierarchical provisions. Meanwhile, in the Berlin-Brandenburg case, it is the central governments at state (land) level that seek to create a comprehensive virtual entity containing both territories in their entirety to connect the periphery to the metropolitan core. This is a different approach to the city-driven and thus inevitably selective approach to creating the Øresund (Greater Copenhagen) Region. Whether the new politics of promoting the whole of Skåne as part of Greater Copenhagen matches reality remains to be seen.

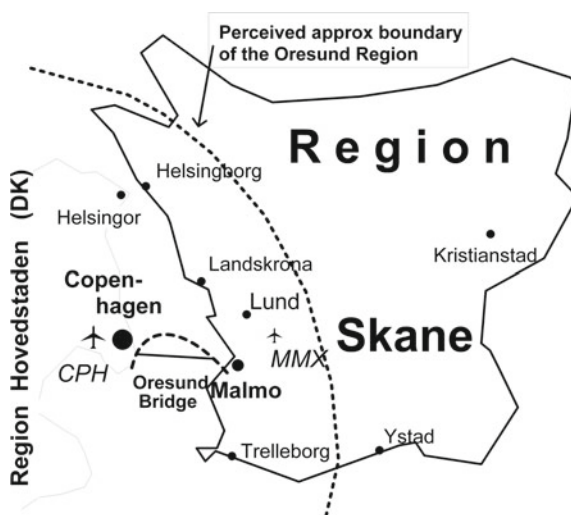
6.3 Metropolitanised Fragmented Regionalism in the *Greater Copenhagen/Øresund Region* and the *Capital City Region Berlin-Brandenburg*

The two examples discussed here illustrate the political tensions between the inherent individualism of a competitiveness agenda and the collective nature of democratic principles in a territorial state of equal representation of interests and opportunities. Both go beyond philosophical questions of political narratives and ideologies, as they manifest themselves for all to see and experience in the growing metropolitan role in shaping political and economic agendas and manifest them in networks of interest relations and engagements. These transcend, and seem to challenge, the certainties of belonging and participation in processes and decisions based on territorial belonging primarily. Political representation is based on the certainties and predictabilities of fixed administrative and political territorial entities. And so they appear to struggle acknowledging the growing de facto role of variable, less visible and fluid importance of city-centric network relations when it comes to the manifestation of opportunities on the basis of participating in these networks. In both examples, there has been a growing unease about this shift away from a territorially defined understanding of opportunity and ‘voice’ in political and economic decisions to a much more narrowly and inherently more selectively individualistic definition of political–economic space and opportunity. And so, a politically ‘easy’ answer has been to re-represent territories and network spaces in a more integrated way.

6.3.1 *Example 1: Discord Between the Selective Nature of the Metropolitan-Centric Virtual Greater Copenhagen-Øresund Region and that of the State-Defined Territorial ‘Container’ of Region Skåne*

“Denmark wants to rebrand parts of Sweden as as Greater Copenhagen” proclaims the newspaper *The Guardian* on 5 March 2015 (Crouch 2015). And as part of that, a map is shown that depicts the whole of the Swedish Region Skåne—located across the Øresund Strait off the Danish coast. Region Skåne in southern Sweden is one of the state-defined regional entities covering the country to dispense centrally allocated service provision functions, such as health care. Although the region gained some additional competencies, including economic development in 2012, it remains a creature of the central state. Skåne shows a clear functional geographic division between a ‘metropolitan, urbanised western seaboard and a more peripheral, less accessible, rural central and eastern part (Fig. 6.1). This division has been highlighted, and exacerbated, by the creation and marketing of the Øresund Region as a virtual concept space of international economic engagement. This virtual entity

Fig. 6.1 Øresund Region
(Greater Copenhagen)
Source Author



was anchored to the new fixed link of the Øresund Bridge opened in 2000 between Copenhagen and Malmö as the two bridgeheads. The Bridge has come to symbolise connectivity and international (even global) outlook and engagement.

Although somewhat of a sweeping and, by all intent, also provocative claim, the Guardian's headline points to a growing momentum in favour of publicly acknowledging the dominance of metropolitan interests in the wider region—on both sides of the Strait. This is somewhat of a remarkable shift in attitude. Some 20 years earlier, when the Øresund region was still a conceptual political project attached to the completion of the fixed link bridge across the Strait (opened in 2000), the geographically neutral name Øresund was chosen for the newly advocated cross-border region as a compromise reached among local actors to avoid all reference to its main cities, especially Copenhagen, Malmö and Lund (interview A). The reason was the strong sense of competition between those cities, but also the effort to not upset the municipalities in the wider region. It is a challenge also found in other city regions with competing centres, such as the name Puget Sound, rather than Greater Seattle, in the Pacific NW of the USA (Herrschel 2013).

The concept of the virtual Øresund region was driven by the realisation on both sides that mutual benefits, including better international visibility and thus enhanced competitive advantage, were to be gained from 'scaling up' beyond national boundaries. Intercity rivalries meant that Copenhagen, the Danish capital, was not allowed to give the region its name. Only now, some twenty years later, the realisation of the city's high international recognition factor has resulted in a *volte-face*: in 2016, the Øresund region was recast as Greater Copenhagen (interview B), which explicitly now includes the whole of Skåne region

Important in this region-building project was the expectation on both sides of the sound of a win-win effect of collaboration. This mattered from Copenhagen's perspective, as its national capital status gave it a greater self-confidence and view of

importance than found among the other cities of the region. Viewed in their respective national contexts, centre and relative periphery were thus brought together, an asymmetry which has raised questions about the likely gains for Copenhagen, especially among the local electorate. Indeed, such concerns are latently present in this project, giving the political leadership in Copenhagen a particularly important role in ‘selling’ the benefits of such ‘eastward’ engagement ‘with the province’. Copenhagen’s interest in Malmö has been primarily as an extension to its hinterland for wider (and lower cost) housing choices for Copenhagen residents, an increased consumer demand, and enhanced employment opportunities in an international climate.

It is here that the Øresund region has, as a concept, been of particular relevance. Functioning as the visible backcloth (or sounding board) to Copenhagen’s international and European ambitions, from a Swedish perspective, working with Copenhagen, brings considerable developmental benefit to the whole of southern Sweden through improved links to north-western Europe, especially the global port of Hamburg. True to this understanding, it was deemed at the time that, ‘naturally’, all of Region Skåne would be part of the Øresund Region (interview C), as it represented one cohesive political and cultural-historic territorial entity.

A decade later, reality turned out differently, with the eastern, largely rural, part feeling more distant and increasingly peripheralised, as all attention has turned on Malmö as connecting gateway (interview A, D). Thus, towns like Ystad on the southern coast, which consider themselves outside the imagined and functional Øresund region (interview E), seek other possibilities to step out of the regional shadow. They try to be more visible on their own through emphasis of individuality and thus attempt themselves to be more individualistic and rise above the more peripheral rural surroundings. Participating in EU projects such as those emphasising cultural particularities, e.g. region-specific food, serves as platform for internationalisation and demonstrate network connectivity in the shadow of the Øresund Region. Another form of local self-empowerment in a peripheral setting involves collaborative action among like-positioned groups of municipalities. Such sub-regional networks subdivide Skåne into four smaller network-based network regions—one in each corner. It is a form of mutual assurance and support through occasional meetings just to keep in touch and emphasise collectivity.

True to the idea of ‘new regionalism’, the Øresund Region has remained a virtual space: network defined and little institutionalised, outside governmental hierarchies, with no clear administrative boundaries. Yet municipalities seem quite aware of its invisible limits. As a collective inter-municipal agreement, it has been represented by a small, low key office, the Øresund Committee, involving regular meetings of representatives of the participating municipalities. The main cities have a strong presence on this committee, with the remaining large number of rural municipalities finding only indirect voice through the representatives of the two regions involved.

This is the result of a growing pressure since 2006 by the municipalities ‘contained’ within the territorial regions of Region Skåne and its (since the 2007 reorganisation) Danish counterpart, Capital Region of Denmark (Region Hovedstaden), for more representation of their interests on the Øresund Committee’s board. Such stronger regional voice was to strengthen their—and their municipalities’—influ-

ence vis-à-vis the strong individual presence of the main cities. Yet, the collaborative engagement also has a conditioning ‘backlash’, with some of the main cities concerned feeling constrained in their own decision-making capacity to pursue locally defined opportunities. Malmö, for instance, at first avoided referring to the Øresund Region as a ‘*region*’ altogether, referring to just ‘Øresund’ instead (interview C).

Forms of institutionalisation were thus formed as a very ‘soft’ and thus unthreatening arrangement to coordinate, yet not command, regional interests, as a collaborative municipal arrangement. Here, it matters that the Øresund region has no political dimension of its own, so that a regional agenda does not yield electoral or political bonus points. There is thus no political mileage in lobbying on the—politically virtual—region’s behalf as a spatial entity. Consequently, the Øresund Region only gained voice and operational capacity through its members and their statutory status. It remains to be seen, how the rebranding has affected this *modus operandi*, with a much clearer affinity suggested by its new name Greater Copenhagen to the city of Copenhagen as strong individual actor.

In the absence of fixed structures and, instead, reliance on relationships and linkages, personalities and leadership have mattered consistently in creating the networks that identify shared interests and agendas and act as ‘nodes’. The mayors of Copenhagen and Malmö have been particularly instrumental in this, not at least given the size and dominant importance of the two cities for the whole region. They established a more or less intense and effective collaborative link between the two cities as all but a duopoly, focused, of course, on the two cities’ advantages. This clear demonstration of pursuing metropolitan self-interest has created some resentment outside, especially in the wider region, from where the cities are viewed as ‘doing their own thing’. But also the other cities view this close engagement critically (interview A). Thus, for instance, the old university city of Lund is becoming increasingly wary of the more confident and visible ‘working class’ neighbour Malmö to the south, appearing to attempt to steel its cloths as the traditional international connector of the region.

There is thus an invisible, but potentially very effective, line separating ‘included’ and ‘excluded’ localities and territorial parts of the formal region, *de facto* separating the dynamic, internationally connected metropolitan-centric part, now clearly declaring its hand under the name of Greater Copenhagen, and the rural, less dynamic, more inward-looking and state-centric, largely rural ‘hinterland’ to the east. This includes a danger, therefore, that Skåne, despite being administratively one entity, effectively splits into two spatial parts, each with its own dynamics and strategic plans and objectives, as well as evolving politics and views of the purpose and nature of the region.

Relative peripheralisation is thus not merely the result of geographic distance from a core, but rather, as also evident from the second example, the region Berlin-Brandenburg, of communicative, participative distance to functional networks between key nodes of connectivity—actual and/or perceived. This is thus not merely about infrastructure alone shaping communication and reachability, although this may well have an instrumental role in permitting face-to-face contacts at an operational level, but the sense of being involved and be able to do so.

Some of the ‘cores’ (or network nodes) may participate as actors in different networks for different agendas at the same time, in the simultaneous pursuit of varying interests, and thus enhance their relevance and efficacy as part of that. These networks may be overlapping and overlaying, following variable geometries of engagement and prioritising. They therefore produce differences in density across space, with more or less visible lines of inclusion and exclusion—i.e. relevance—in such network-based policy-making.

Although more populist and confrontational in style and political dynamic, the gap between urban-centric opportunities and those of the ‘rest’ generates a resentment that has, albeit subtly, found its way into the Øresund region and the discussions about its direction. Should regions be mere subdivisions of state territory to function as spatial containers for the centrally directed dispensing of services, or, in a more progressive angle, as geographic entities with an—albeit limited—life of their own. And, so, it is about the nature of state organisation between strict centralism and a more complex, at times even cumbersome, devolution of powers and responsibilities across spatial scales.

Here, it matters that the Øresund Region has no ‘hard’ political dimension of its own. A regional agenda by itself does not yield electoral or political bonus points. Instead, the economically driven and narrated Øresund Region needs to work through the respective underlying administrative structures and regulations and needs to ‘sell’ itself through advantages expected by each participant. Borders, boundaries and institutional and regulative differences continue to matter as needed ‘anchor points’, as do political considerations of likely electoral rewards of participation. Likewise, no participation may be deemed as foregone opportunities. It is for that reason that the conventional (Scandinavian) egalitarian, collective perspective and rationale have come back to be considered as expression of the democratically underpinned state territory.

6.3.2 Example 2: Capital City Region Berlin-Brandenburg: Superficial Spatial Collectivity, Territorial Divisions and Underlying Core–Periphery Inequality

The second example of tensions between state-derived fixed cohesive territoriality and selective metropolitan network-defined background spatiality is the wider Berlin region in eastern Germany. This consists of two federal states, the city state of Berlin, the German capital, and the surrounding, generally rather rural regional state of Brandenburg. Both are separate political–administrative entities with their own parliaments and democratic structures. Especially in Berlin, local and regional interests are firmly intertwined, with the capital city status giving an added international dimension. Brandenburg, by contrast, is characterised by a splattering of market towns in a rural setting, surrounding Berlin in a nearer and farther afield orbit. The structural difference between metropolitan core and rural hinterland is reflected in a

population density that is just a 10th of that of Berlin (GLBB 2018). Interestingly, for historic reasons, Brandenburg's capital, Potsdam, is just outside the Berlin state border and thus an integral part of the conurbation. This further cements the core–periphery gradient. The doughnut structure of Brandenburg, with its centre taken up by the politically and administratively separate Berlin city state, creates hurdles for collaborative administrative–governmental action, such as co-ordinated regional planning and development strategies. An attempt to merge the two units failed in a plebiscite in 1995 (Hauswirth et al. 2003; Herrschel and Newman 2004) owing to historical rivalries and a sense of domination by Brandenburg citizens through a felt boisterous and self-interested Berlin. There is thus a history of metropolis–hinterland contrast and tension, just as discussed for the Øresund region between rural Skåne and the urbanised western seaboard, and including Copenhagen, of course.

Although now presenting itself as an integrated capital (city) region, there is a clear (and largely concentric) functional division, in which Brandenburg marks the immediate surroundings and farther away hinterland of the centrally positioned metropolitan area of Berlin. This gives the administrative boundary between the city state and its (Brandenburg) hinterland greater importance as an 'obstacle' for needed region-wide development policies (Hauswirth et al. 2003; Herrschel and Newman 2004). Just as in Skåne, there is a clear structural unevenness in development conditions and prospects, although Brandenburg shows a more even 'sprinkling' of market towns in a polycentric pattern, organised around Berlin as the central hub.

Nevertheless, reality of functional interaction, especially commuting, highlighted a need for cross-border cooperation and policy coordination. This was acknowledged in the formal agreement between the two regional (state) governments in 1994 as a 'second best' to the failed merger attempts of the two states. A bi-state joint planning authority, located in Potsdam, was created to cover Berlin and the immediately adjoining territory of Brandenburg. This followed the failed attempt of merging the two states, which was rejected in a plebiscite by the independent-minded, Berlin-distrusting residents of Brandenburg (Herrschel and Newman 2004). The *cavitas* of 'immediately' matters here, as it refers to a politically increasingly difficult division between the inner area of Brandenburg state, directly surrounding Berlin city limits and thus experiencing overspill population from Berlin.

In essence, the revised plan of 2006 was a hub and spoke model overlaying the older model with its two concentric rings around the Berlin city-state as metropolitan core (Fig. 6.2a). This intentionally somewhat obscured de facto divide of the Brandenburg territory into a faster-growing inner area and slow growth or even stagnant or declining, peripheral outer ring. This paid tribute to the political contestation against such a division into effectively two classes of residents—those with greater and those with lesser opportunities and economic relevance (interview F). This twofold development scenario of Brandenburg was thus projected as a two-speed economic space, with different development prospects and opportunities attached to the inner and outer parts, respectively. While the outer part was projected—and thus implicitly accepted—as remaining relatively marginalised in terms of benefiting from the expected metropolitan development impetus, and so peripheral, the inner part was accepted as inherently growing 'overspill' area of Berlin. Metropolitan-ness has thus

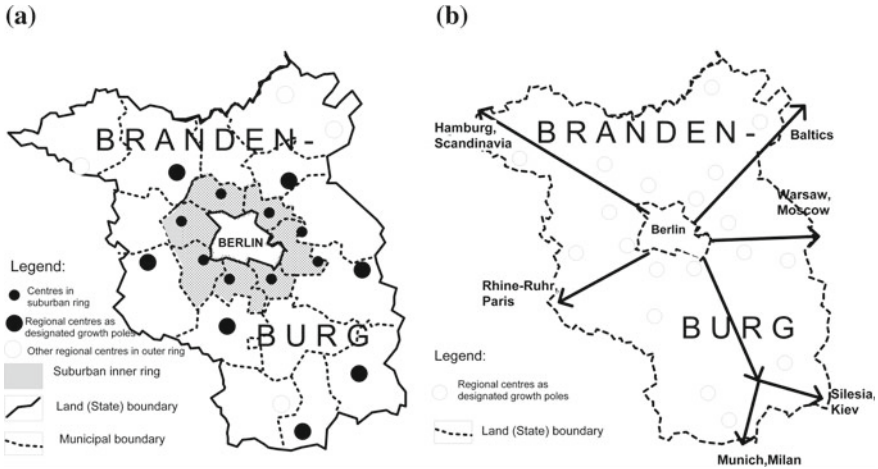


Fig. 6.2 **a** Brandenburg State development plan 2004. *Source* Author, based upon GLBB (2004). **b** Brandenburg State development plan since 2009. *Source* Author, based upon GLBB (2009)

come to equal growth and international connectedness (via the capital city status of Berlin), whereas distance from it implies the opposite. This, in turn, raises questions about presumed equality in democratic representation of the population's interests and consideration by state provisions. Those living nearer to Berlin may attract more attention and acquire a more audible political 'voice', because of their higher economic value (if only in sheer numbers) for the Brandenburg state. They also are more likely to get politically engaged than those further away in areas with much lesser expected economic impact and thus developmental relevance.

Since 2005, 10 years after setting up institutionalised joint planning, both states agreed to market themselves jointly as Capital City Region Berlin-Brandenburg. In so doing, they sought to pool regional qualities—metropolitan-ness and rural lifestyle, recreation and affordable housing (GLBB 2018). Clearly, collaboration is based on a perceived win-win outcome as rationale for doing such a thing. Yet, there is a clear core-periphery gradient with growing distance from Berlin, as acknowledged in the state-wide development plan valid until 2009. This followed structural evidence and distinguished between a functionally closely integrated (suburbanised) inner ring immediately around Berlin (*Innerer Verflechtungsraum*), and an outer part around that with fewer such functional links and a more rural structure away from the metropolis (Hauswirth et al. 2003; Herrschel and Newman 2004) (see Fig. 6.2a/b). The implicit message, of course, is that development potential and opportunities rise with proximity to the metropolis. Indeed, there were two separate development plans for Brandenburg's inner and outer ring areas.

According to the then dominant view of a Berlin radiating out development impulses into the region, the first development plans proposed an 'inner ring' of intense functional interaction with Berlin across its administrative boundary to Brandenburg. Beyond that, an outer ring of expected lesser development pressure was pro-

posed, where growth—and growth was expected after all—would be concentrated in a few, evenly distributed existing market towns as ‘growth poles’. The associated leitbild is so-called *concentrated de-concentration*, i.e. a plan-directed concentration of expected sprawl pressure on existing towns and other centres to boost a polycentric structure. The goal is a more even distribution of Berlin-generated growth effects via these towns into the more peripheral, rural parts of the region (interview F). The main ‘growth corridors’ followed the main train lines and roads radiating out from Berlin (GLBB 2006).

In 2009, this image was replaced by a greater emphasis on sectors along the main transport (railway) routes radiating out from Berlin (Fig. 6.2b). This revised representation reduced the impression of a two class status in opportunities and political–economic relevance for residents living nearer Berlin as against farther away, with each sector touching Berlin’s administrative boundary. This suggested a greater ‘openness’ to residents in each sector to participate in Berlin’s growth dynamic. Relational connectivity, rather than territorial situation is now emphasised. This spatial model no longer represents visibly a separation between belonging to distinct areas with differing development opportunities attached. Instead, distance as a likely obstacle is only implicitly included in the development plan: being on, or away from, the main connecting lines as transport routes.

It is no surprise, therefore, that municipalities not located on one of the suburban railway lines complain about being confined to a status of disconnect—both de facto and visually—and thus limited or even hampered in their scope for development (Burghardt 2018). The city of Fürstenberg, a market town in the outer reaches of Brandenburg, for instance, rails against the new plan’s negative effect on development prospects of rural areas (rather than improving them). City councillors and politicians call it a ‘*Land* dying plan’ (‘Landessterbeplan’), as it appears to cement inequalities and development obstacles, rather than seek to ameliorate and counteract them. Similarly, Werder an der Havel, another one of the ‘outer fringe’ central places of the *Land* development plan, complains about still being treated as ‘no growth’, even though, it is claimed, there are clear signs of Berlin’s overspill also reaching them (Wir sind Werder 2018). Quite evidently, therefore, there has been a shift in perceiving—and representing—local opportunities within the Berlin-Brandenburg region as defined by more than mere geographic distance: connectivity or ‘reachability’ matter. Politically, this is opportune, as the sectoral model, superficially at least at first glance, seems to offer more equal development prospects for municipalities than a simple distance decay model suggests (interview F). Unevenness is now presented in a more subtle way, distinguishing between positions within sectors, rather than much broader concentric circles. Individual place connectivity, especially through suburban railway corridors, suggests a more varied and locally specific scope for development, than an a priori relegation to a fast-moving or slow-moving circle around Berlin. The underlying economic realities of unequal population distribution, for instance, remain and are important determinants of development prospects.

The new, ‘flow-based’ sectoral spatial representation—as imagined scenario—fuzzies (intentionally) the factor ‘distance’ from Berlin. Instead, projected and desired connectivities and linkages are used to suggest positive development poten-

tials across the whole state territory as one space economic entity. Yet, differences in prospects are still there, only now less immediately evident, as distances between the main commuter lines leading into Berlin. These divisions thus follow the sectoral model. While this may in reality not change conditions per se, it no longer projects the state territory as a binary ‘metropolitan core’ versus peripheralised ‘rest’ scenario (see also Danson and De Souza 2012). The new sectoral programmatic image of state-space scales down these contrasts to the local level so that they become less readily visible and thus politically contestable at higher level. The current *gilets jaunes* protestations in France, however, show that local discontent may very well join up to exercise pressure at regional and national level.

The sectoral model, now, with its focus on linkages and suggested relations beyond the territory of Brandenburg, seeks to mediate the functionally defined, stark image of a quite steep core–periphery gradient of decreasing development prospects and opportunities. This puts greater emphasis on relational connectivity than geographic distance. In fact, a space of hubs and sweeping flows is presented (SSU and MIL 2012). These flows are shown as arrows reaching across the state territory in different directions and within and across its borders to places well beyond Brandenburg and Germany, thus seeking to reduce the visibility—and impact of territorial boundaries for likely development opportunities. Projected relations are vague and strategically ambitious, rather than geographically specific, representing more a notional strategic bracket around the Brandenburg state territory as a sign of togetherness, cohesiveness and participation for all—people and places. In effect, therefore, a programmatic, projected virtual strategic (planning) space is being superimposed onto the previous concentric representation of the state territory. This distinguished between two types of economic ‘opportunity spaces’ defined solely by a line of geographic equidistance from the centre—Berlin. Not surprisingly, similar to the Øresund example, tensions arise with growing mismatch between the territorial structure and its fixed boundaries and the fluid nature of network-defined spaces, where boundaries do not really exist and relations and actual and perceived opportunities matter instead.

Connectivity and networks as expressions of opportunity, clearly now matter more than in past representations. They are less clearly visible and measurable and thus also less likely to be politically charged. Some sweeping arrows to places beyond the region and Germany may easily be presented as a more positive image of latent opportunities waiting to be utilised in and by localities across the region. Politically, this is an advantage, compared with the more territorially specific image, where it was quite easy to identify whether one was part of the inner ring and its publicly acknowledged greater metropolitan-related access to opportunities or was not (Seibert 2008; GLBB 2004).

6.4 Conclusions

This chapter examined the inter-relation between a priori defined state territory with fixed boundaries, and network-defined, metropolitan-centric, variable ‘back-

ground' spatiality. 'Space' was used here in the sense of Manuel Castells' conceptualisation of 'spaces of flows' (Castells 2011), with its emphasis on nodes and functional interlinkages. 'Territoriality', by contrast, is used in the sense of Taylor's (1994) characterisation of territory as a clearly demarcated—by a sharp line—'container' for state administration and the application of policies. By elaborating a clear distinction between the terms 'territory' and 'space', the argument here has sought to show the potential conflictuality between the quite different rationales and modi operandi underpinning the two types of geographies. This matters as less congruence between them creates 'gaps' and exclusions. Network spaces are by their very nature individualistic and selective in outlook, while territory involves geographic cohesiveness within a set of boundaries.

The distinction here has been between (1) territory as a priori defined by fixed borders or boundaries as geographic entities within a state hierarchy, with powers and responsibilities attached, and (2) 'space' as ad hoc defined virtual geographic projection of network relations and functionalities. The former serves as vehicle for uniform democratic representation and linking state and the population as a whole, while the latter is inherently selective, mirroring group-specific interests and opportunities as they connect and collaborate to seek opportunity. The two types of regionalisation coexist, as the case studies of the Øresund/Greater Copenhagen Region and Capital City Region Berlin-Brandenburg illustrated. Their relationship can be more or less complex and also conflictual, mirroring varying degrees of congruence and thus dissatisfaction.

By their different nature, territoriality and virtual spaces may intersect and cut across each other's more or less clearly defined delimitations. And these intersections and thus degrees of cross-cutting may vary in extent and frequency in response to the underlying reconfiguration of the economic opportunity-defined network spaces. As a result, with functional economic, but also, and in particular, political, connections and relations mattering increasingly more, networkspaces project—and they cannot be more than mere projections of a network—connectivities between like-interested actors. They collaborate to enhance their prospects when pursuing (ultimately individual) opportunities and thus construct networks around relationships built around shared interests. This may, or may not, embrace a whole state-territorial entity, such as a municipality, city-region or sub-state region per se. Instead, it may involve merely a section of it, cutting across that territory's administrative boundary, and may include, instead, a section of neighbouring territory on the other side of the administrative border. The result is a dissection of state territory into individual 'corridors of connectivity' (Herschel 2013, 2018) as preferential ties between like-interested actors. This may well include whole cities, as they seek to pursue their own advantages jointly with other cities, irrespective of their immediate territorial contexts. Likewise, an economically and functionally dominant city may expand its hinterland by tying larger—but clearly demarcated—portions of the surrounding territory to its own, irrespective of the dividing effect of administrative boundaries. The Øresund/Greater Copenhagen Region illustrated the former, the Capital City Region of Berlin-Brandenburg, the latter.

This potentially conflictual relationship between the different geographies is turned into a mutually dependent symbiosis, which may lead to seemingly contradictory policy agendas and narratives: ‘space’ encourages and reflects strategic visions and plans, together with opportunity-driven innovative policy-making. ‘Territory’, by contrast, provides attached political–institutional, fiscal and legal resources and capacities obtained through the state structure and organisation of executing power. The outcome is, in effect, a reinforcement of previously underlying, yet not quite as clearly exposed and implemented, developments associated with functionally driven collaborations and interactions as descriptors of ‘new regionalism’ (Harrison 2012). Localised, especially urban, interests become expected to act as the sole drivers of a territory’s economic development prospects with all its differential implications for the population. This raises questions about the scope for less well connected and less ‘attractive’ and thus opportune localities and actors to acquire the same opportunities as the more experienced and institutionally capable larger cities and city regions with their inherently greater visibility and ‘opportunity appeal’ in a globalised setting.

The political justification for this urban-centric approach to regionalisation has been that of creating new geographies of opportunities by allowing self-organising bundling of interests around a shared agenda. Both the Øresund Region and the Capital City Region Berlin-Brandenburg illustrate that. In the latter, for instance, the peripheral ‘outer’ cities of Brandenburg organised themselves in the *Städtekrantz* (Ring of Cities) (Städtekrantz 2017) to gain more visibility and political voice. For such arrangements, trust between collaborating partners is crucial and also an understanding of each other’s perspectives and experienced pressures (GLBB 2004). Important are shared goals, not just short-lived compromises around minimal commonality at a particular moment.

Yet, such process also raises the prospect of (re-) producing structurally inherent inequalities at the regional scale, with sharp distinctions between spaces and actors as they are selectively included and excluded in opportunistic connections and relations. The outcome of such an individualised approach to shaping ‘regions’ is spatial perforation and fragmentation of senses of shared purpose and togetherness. And these manifest existing, as well as produce new, peripheries. Effectively, therefore, a form of *deconstruction* occurs, in which conventional state territoriality is being challenged by a virtual (‘soft’) spatial representation of, and engagement with, selective, temporary, metropolitan-defined and metropolitan-centric economic capacity. The outcome may contrast quite significantly with conventional, geographically inclusive arrangements, where policies are attached to a state territory.

This, again, raises questions about the balancing between the different rationales and *modi operandi* of the projected, inherently opportunistic, virtual ‘spatial’, on the one hand, and the actual, institutionalised, perhaps bureaucratic, but democratic–representationally uniform state ‘territorial’, on the other. Both operate through varying mechanisms and qualities of inclusion and exclusion, serve different purposes and function through a variety of mechanisms of legitimation. This potentially uneasy, even conflictual, relationship changes over time, as public discourse, economic opportunities and political agendas and actors vary. As a result, the pendulum may swing back and forth between the propagators of, and drivers behind, either

approach. Each will follow its own rationales and politically voiced justifications: (1) the state-territorial, drawing on its democratic legitimation as representative—and caretaker—of the population’s interest as a whole, and (2) the economically (globalisation) driven relational ‘spatial’, shaped by a group of strong local (urban) players. Connection between the two geographic principles is constructed by advertised individual metropolitan successes as ultimately beneficial for everyone as it filters down to the (state) territory as a whole and its population. In other words, it is the notion of ‘trickle down’ (Gordon 1999) employed by neoliberal discourse as its legitimation that serves to link virtual opportunity spaces and statutory state territoriality.

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Interview A: with official, City of Lund, 10 January 2013.

Interview B: with official, City of Helsingborg, 19 April 2018.

Interview C: with official at Region Skåne, Malmö, 19 June 2002.

Interview D: with official at Region Skåne, Malmö, 10 January 2013.

Interview E: with official at Southeast Skåne Region office, Ystad, 20 May 2014.

Interview F: with official at GLBB, Potsdam, 5 July 2013. The author would also like to thank the editors for allowing me to participate in this book project and for their tireless work in keeping the project on schedule.

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Chapter 7

Metropolitan Areas in Poland as a Challenge for Urban Agenda at Different Territorial Levels



Maciej Smętkowski, Dorota Celińska-Janowicz and Katarzyna Romańczyk

Abstract Metropolisation processes pose a challenge for public policies at all hierarchical levels. This is clearly visible in Poland, which can be considered as a semi-peripheral country that is more affected by globalisation, including foreign capital flows, than highly developed countries. Since public policies are weak in Poland, market forces have become the main factor shaping its spatial structures. Public policies related to the formation and development of metropolitan areas are characterised by low effectiveness and seem to be subordinated to the implementation of European Union policies. At the national level, awareness of the needs of metropolitan areas does not translate into effective legal or organisational solutions for management (with minor exceptions) nor the spatial and strategic planning of these areas. At the regional level, self-government authorities struggle to reconcile metropolitan area development and the needs of peripheral parts of the regional hinterland. Bottom-up initiatives within metropolitan areas are hindered by a number of obstacles, including a lack of effective legal and financial tools. This shows the importance of effective multi-level governance in implementation of metropolitan policy. Although the need for such policy has been widely acknowledged in Poland, the implementation has encountered series of obstacles in recent years.

Keywords Metropolitan area · Urban agenda · Multi-level governance

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7.1 Introduction

Metropolisation is the most important territorial dimension of contemporary globalisation processes. It is manifested not only in the concentration of control and management functions in major urban centres, but also in the expansion of a global network of companies providing advanced business services (Sassen 1991; Taylor 2007). These processes, combined with high urban innovation potential and attractiveness for foreign capital and tourists, make metropolises the most dynamic poles of economic growth in countries across the world (Friedman 1986; Krätke 2007). Attracting investments and inhabitants create conditions for their spatial expansion resulting in the formation of extensive functional urban areas, which can be described as metropolitan areas.

The aim of the chapter is to present the evolution of policy at national, regional and local government level in Poland in relation to the metropolisation process that has been shaping the country's space since 1989. At the national level, subsequent government attempts at top-down establishment of metropolitan areas are critically assessed, including an evaluation of applicable strategic documents. At the regional level, the way in which selected voivodeship self-government authorities approach metropolitan centres and their functional regions in the context of regional development strategies as well as the distribution of EU Cohesion Policy funds is discussed. At the local level, examples of bottom-up solutions relating to the management of metropolitan areas are highlighted.

The research is based on data on the development of six major Polish metropolises and their regions, including the allocation of Cohesion Policy funds, which is an important manifestation of public intervention in relation to the metropolitan regions. The results of the analysis were compared with the review of strategic documents at the national and regional level relating to the importance of metropolitan areas for the processes of socio-economic development and territorial cohesion. At the same time, in order to illustrate the effects of bottom-up cooperation in metropolitan areas as well as related problems, existing reports and studies on these issues for selected metropolises were analysed. Such a multidimensional approach allows to synthesis metropolitan agenda across different territorial levels in Poland.

The structure of the chapter is as follows: Firstly, we discuss the scale of metropolisation in Poland's space and problems related to the functional regions of the largest cities. Secondly, the approach of successive governments to the issues of metropolitan areas is analysed, including the context of EU Cohesion Policy implementation. In particular, a lack of consistency in the implemented activities is observed, including difficulties in determining whether metropolitan areas should be an element of spatial or rather regional policy, as well as a certain superiority of EU policy in this respect. Thirdly, based on selected examples, the role of the metropolis in the policy of individual regions is discussed in the context of the city-region relationship, which may be reflected not only in strategic documents, but also in the distribution of EU funds within regional operational programmes. Fourthly, the adopted models of bottom-up solutions for the management of Polish metropolitan areas are reviewed, along with

an attempt to assess their effectiveness. As a result, the chapter provides a synthetic image of the reactions of public authorities at various levels to the metropolisation process over the last 20 years in Poland. This shows the importance of multi-level governance in implementation of urban policy that has been addressed recently in Amsterdam Pact (EC 2016).

7.2 The Metropolisation Process in Poland as a Challenge for Public Policies

Large cities have become the main beneficiary of the socio-economic transformation in Poland, which in the first phase affected especially the old industrial regions (Gorzelać 1996). Rural areas (apart from the areas of northern and western Poland in which state-owned farms dominated) were less affected by the change of economic model due to the fragmentation of the agrarian structure that delayed their modernisation and thus lagged far behind the metropolises. The inflow of foreign capital was particularly conducive to the development of big cities, which—apart from the development of local entrepreneurship—was the most important factor of their growth (Domański 2003).

The Polish systemic transformation included decentralization, which was manifested in the establishment of communes, i.e. local self-governments in 1990. The position of communes was gradually strengthened by equipping them with their own revenues, which included not only shares in state taxes (PIT, CIT), but also local taxes and fees. The power of local self-governments at the same time triggered competition among them for capital investments and residents, which was most evident in the vicinity of large urban centres. In 1999, the administrative system was supplemented with the introduction of territorial self-government at the county and regional (NUTS2) level. The most important outcome of the administrative reform was the replacement of 49 voivodeships corresponding to the city-region concept (NUTS3) with 16 large self-governed regions (NUTS2).

Since the 1999 reform, discussions on the need to establish metropolitan areas have been present both in the political sphere and in the media. The discussions are centred around two premises: firstly, as a result of Poland's inclusion in globalisation processes, metropolises have become the country's most important development centres. Secondly, since 1989, suburbanisation processes have started in the areas surrounding the largest cities, delayed by about 20–30 years in comparison to those that took place in Western European countries. These two processes have posed challenges for urban policy on various spatial scales: (a) national—the polarisation of the country's spatial structure, (b) regional—the relationship between the metropolis and the surrounding region and (c) subregional—the deconcentration of population and economic activity within a functional urban region.

These challenges were strengthened after Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004: Apart from a positive impulse to bring the country's development

level in convergence with the European average through participation in the common market, the accession created opportunities for the pro-development use of European funds concentrated mainly in urban areas, especially metropolises (Bachter and Gorzelak 2007). Self-government authorities of voivodeships have played a vital role in the implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy. The regional operational programmes in the 2007–2013 financial perspective constituted about 27% of total EU funds dedicated to Poland, and in the current perspective, this share has increased to about 40% (Gorzelak et al. 2018). Local governments, which were responsible for a large share of investment projects implemented under national and regional operational programmes, also became a significant beneficiary of Cohesion Policy funds.

The polarisation of economic space that took place in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries as a result of their systemic transformation has been the subject of numerous studies (e.g. Ezcurra et al. 2007; Monastiriotis 2011; Smętkowski and Wójcik 2012). The primary causes include:

- the concentration of advanced business services characterised by high value added in large urban centres,
- the development of modern industry primarily in the metropolitan areas of large cities,
- the decisive importance of external factors in development processes, chiefly in the form of inflows of foreign capital, which is located in regions characterised by good transport accessibility (airports, and motorways) and high-quality human capital.

The research focuses less on the dynamics of this phenomenon, including an indication of the period in which the highest increase in regional differences took place. It should be noted that in Poland this period was—in line with Williamson's (1965) hypothesis—the first decade of the socio-economic transformation, when the country moved from a centrally planned economy to a free market, and joined global processes (Smętkowski and Gorzelak 2019). The change was manifested primarily in the rapid development of the largest cities, six of which numbered over one million residents in their functional areas. However, it should be noted that, even in this group, the dynamics of development was varied (Table 7.1). The first transformation period led to a significant strengthening of Poland's capital—Warsaw (development of control and management functions and advanced business services) and Poznań (development of modern industry)—which later maintained their position as leaders of economic growth. After 2008, the metropolitan area of Wrocław joined the leader group. In other metropolises, partly as a result of the deeper and not always completed restructuring of traditional industry (Kraków—metallurgy, Tri-City—shipbuilding industry, Łódź—textile industry), the success was not so pronounced. In the case of Kraków and Łódź, it was visible after 2000, while the Tri-City performed relatively better during the first transformation period. The economic success of these cities (except for Łódź) is confirmed by the high increase (by Polish standards) in the number of inhabitants of metropolitan areas. Demographic development was one of the factors reducing disparities in the level of affluence between metropolises and

Table 7.1 Main metropolitan areas in Poland—demographic and economic performance in years 1995/2005–2015

Metropolitan area (NUTS3) ^a	Population (NUTS 3)			Change 2005–2015 (%)	Average annual growth (thousand)	GDP per capita (NUTS 3) (national average = 100)						Ratio of GDP per capita in metropolis (NUTS3) to regional hinterland (remaining part of NUTS2)	
	2015 (million)	Change 2005–2015 (%)	Average annual growth (thousand)			1995	2000	2008	2015	Change 1995–2015 (pp)	2000	2015	Change 2000–2015 (pp)
Warsaw	3.34	8.2	20.0	168	198	195	201	33	2.39	2.22	-0.17		
Poznań	1.17	7.4	6.6	112	159	159	157	45	1.96	1.87	-0.09		
Wrocław	1.21	4.4	4.9	118	115	121	135	17	1.22	1.42	0.20		
Kraków	1.47	5.6	6.0	112	112	117	120	8	1.53	1.81	0.27		
Tri-City (Gdańsk)	1.31	8.0	7.9	107	116	109	113	6	1.52	1.52	0.00		
Łódź	1.08	- 7.4	- 5.6	105	102	109	111	6	1.32	1.38	0.06		

^aNUTS3 as a proxy of functional urban areas

Source Own elaboration based on Central Statistical Office (CSO) data

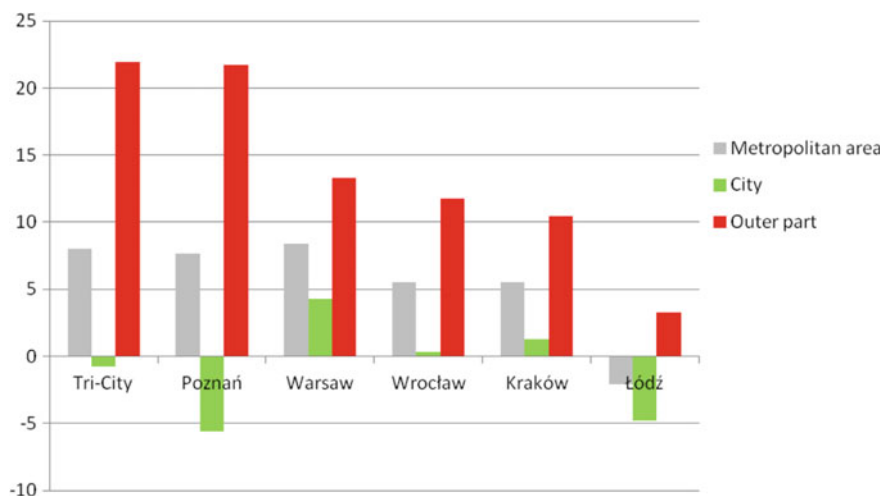
the rest of the country which, according to official registers, was characterised by a relatively stable population. Apart from Łódź, which recorded a marked population decline, the rate of population growth ranged from ca. 0.4% per year in Wrocław to around 0.8% in the case of Warsaw and the Tri-City in years 2005–2015.

One of the problems that emerged before Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 was the large and growing disparities between metropolises and the remaining part of their metropolitan macroregions (Smętkowski and Gorzelak 2008).¹ The disparities resulted mainly from differences in terms of: (a) economic structure due to dynamic development of the service sector in the metropolis, and slower development of agriculture and traditional industries in the regional hinterland, (b) concentration of the working age population in the metropolis, while in the regional surroundings the share of the post-working age population was growing and (c) higher productivity of manufacturing located in the metropolis in comparison to the outer part of the metropolitan region (Smętkowski et al. 2011). In subsequent years, the scale of disparities in the case of Warsaw and Poznań regions diminished significantly. This might indicate that trickle-down effects occurred there. After 2000, intra-regional disparities increased mainly in Kraków and Wrocław, though on a smaller scale in the latter. In turn, Tri-City and Łódź metropolitan regions were not affected by polarisation, probably due to the less dynamic development of these metropolises.

The second burning issue of metropolises is suburbanisation. On the one hand, it has led to the depletion of tax revenues in central cities due to the outflow of wealthy inhabitants; on the other hand, it has forced the necessity to meet the needs of new residents in areas surrounding the metropolitan core (Lisowski et al. 2014). It is worth emphasising that, in Polish conditions, the development of technical and social infrastructure in suburban municipalities has usually failed to keep up with the influx of new residents. Moreover, the level of affluence in the municipalities surrounding the city is not always high. This is a result of the concentration of economic potential in the central city, due to a much weaker deconcentration of jobs compared to the deconcentration of population (Smętkowski 2011).

The scale of population deconcentration in metropolitan areas can be illustrated by a comparison of population changes in the six largest Polish cities and their surroundings (Fig. 7.1). In two cities, Poznań and the Tri-City, the phenomenon took place on such a large scale that it led to a significant loss of inhabitants by the central cities, accompanied by a 20% increase in the number of inhabitants in their surroundings. This problem was not so evident in Warsaw, Wrocław and Kraków, where demographic decline did not affect the central city, while the growth of new inhabitants in outer parts of their metropolitan areas was—according to official statistics—slower (10–14%). Particular problems were visible in Łódź, where depopulation of both the city and the whole metropolitan area took place, albeit with a small increase in the number of inhabitants in suburban areas.

¹For comparison, in 2015, the ratio of GDP per capita between Ile-de-France and the surrounding NUTS2 region, which is one of the largest in Europe, was 2.07.



* NUTS3 as a proxy of the metropolitan area

Fig. 7.1 Population change in the metropolitan areas of the largest Polish cities in 2004–2016 (%)*. *Source* Authors' elaboration based on CSO data. *NUTS3 as a proxy of the metropolitan area

7.3 Metropolitan Areas in National-Level Policies

At the national level, the discussion on metropolitan areas in Poland dates back to 1999 when administration reform replaced small voivodeships (approx. NUTS3) with large self-governing units (NUTS2). The issue has gained importance along with the increasing negative consequences of suburbanisation that in Poland often takes form of urban sprawl. Although in the last 20 years, several solutions have been introduced and many more discussed, implementation of top-down approaches face numerous problems. In the Polish three-tier structure of administrative division, no level can be recognised as an analogue of the metropolitan area. The idea of introducing a fourth, metropolitan level, did not meet with a positive reception by local actors (e.g. the Union of Polish Cities, Silesian Union of Municipalities and Poviats and The Union of Polish Poviats). Thus, all aspects of metropolitan planning and management must be based on voluntary cooperation between various units representing different administrative levels (Mikula and Kaczmarek 2017).

7.3.1 *The Significance of Metropolitan Areas in Strategic Documents and Policies*

Four main strategic documents at the national level shape the Polish regional development and spatial policy that affect the urban agenda: the National Spatial Devel-

opment Concept 2030 (NSDC 2011), National Strategy for Regional Development 2010–2020 (NSRD 2010), National Urban Policy 2030 (NUP 2030) and the Strategy for Responsible Development 2020/2030. In the first three documents, metropolises and their functional areas are seen as key drivers of the country's development, while the fourth document, adopted by the current national-conservative government, presents a different approach, focused on social and territorial cohesion. Although all documents recognise the problems and challenges related to metropolitan management and planning, their provisions are only postulates, and in order to be implemented, they should be translated into concrete legislative tools or public investment activities (which seldom happens).

The National Spatial Development Concept 2030 defines the metropolitan area as a type of voivodeship urban functional area, occupying the highest position in the settlement hierarchy. The Concept defines and explicitly names 10 metropolitan areas in Poland, characterised by strong fragmentation and competing local interests, as well as the existence of several management levels (municipality, county and region) with various legally defined tasks and competences (Mikula and Kaczmarek 2017). In the Concept, the increasing competitiveness of the Polish major urban centres is seen as one of the main aims of national spatial development policy, but the role of settlement polycentricity, reflecting the importance of small and medium size cities, is also underlined. In the metropolitan perspective, it is also important to stress that one of its aims is to limit uncontrolled suburbanisation (as a way of restoring and preserving spatial order) as well as to promote functional integration, which relates directly to planning and management at the metropolitan level. The Concept states that metropolitan areas require special planning instruments enabling integrated spatial policy for the whole area as well as legal solutions, such as obligatory strategies and spatial development plans (NSDC 2011: 80–81).

The National Strategy for Regional Development 2010–2020 predicts an increasing role of metropolises and their functional areas in Poland's future development. The general aim of the strategy is the effective use of regional and territorial development potentials, and the metropolitan dimension is especially important for its first detailed goal, i.e. fostering regional competitiveness. It presupposes strengthening the metropolitan functions of voivodeship centres and integrating their functional areas through the introduction of special legal and organisational regulations regarding the provision of public services and development of multimodal public transport. Special attention is paid to Warsaw and its metropolitan area whose development should increase the international position of the Polish capital city (NSRD 2010: 79–80, 91, 97). Similarly, the NSDC and the National Strategy for Regional Development mention the necessity to prepare strategies for the metropolitan areas in order to properly plan the development of urban space as well as to programme support for urban centres as growth locomotives. The strategies should include inter-municipal cooperation mechanisms to define and achieve common goals (NSRD 2010: 172).

In 2015, the growing role of cities in Poland's development, as well as the increasingly visible problems of these areas, prompted the government to adopt the National Urban Policy 2030. One of the five main aims of the document is to create conditions for effective partnership management of urban areas, especially metropolises. Apart

from this point, the document does not pay much attention to metropolises, focusing more on functional areas as the main target of public interventions and policies, as well as the main entities of joint management. It is worth emphasising that the document does not point to metropolises and their functional areas (metropolitan areas) as areas of specific needs in terms of management but states that ‘management of functional urban areas refers to all cities, regardless of their size’ (NUP 2015: 92). These areas are defined as entities that are crucial for mitigating excessive suburbanisation, environmental protection and sustainable transport. The National Urban Policy opts for management based on voluntary collaboration and coordinated action between municipalities within functional areas; it does not present any special tool or instrument dedicated to this task, neither for functional urban nor metropolitan areas. The document recommends using existing collaboration and coordination tools based on the principles of partnership and flexibility, as well as new financial incentives for municipalities towards collaboration (carrot-type policy) (NUP 2015).

Finally, the Strategy for Responsible Development until 2020 (with a perspective until 2030) criticises the strategic documents adopted by the previous government that attributed particular importance to metropolitan centres as being crucial for the whole country’s development. The SOR focuses more on development that is socially and territorially balanced rather than increasing the international competitiveness of the largest cities and their functional areas. As a result, recommendations for urban policy in metropolitan areas include: supporting cooperation and the coordination of development activities in functional urban areas that also encompass rural areas; supporting urban low-emission and Integrated Territorial Investments Strategies (see below) and rational urbanisation through the introduction of legal and collaborative mechanisms in the areas of, *inter alia*, joint investment and spatial planning as well as transport and education, and the redevelopment of brownfields. By 2020, the strategy assumes the implementation of the Act on the Silesian Metropolitan Union and the ordering of regulations on metropolitan union creation, while the post-2020 perspective includes the introduction of legal instruments enabling the creation of other metropolitan unions.

7.3.2 Metropolitan Area Management: A ‘Never-Ending Story’

The first attempts of the Polish government to introduce a legal basis for management and government at the metropolitan level go back as far as 2005. The idea of a special Metropolitan Act dedicated to the largest cities (usually defined as exceeding 0.5 million inhabitants) was driven, on the one hand, by the need for strategic planning and achieving spatial, economic and social cohesion, and on the other hand, by the pragmatic requirements of effective everyday management (Mikula and Kaczmarek 2017). There are two main legal pathways that tackle the issue of metropolitan areas: planning law and special regulations on metropolitan areas.

In the most important regulation regarding spatial planning in Poland—the Act on Spatial Planning and Development of 2003—metropolitan areas are addressed in two ways: from the regional (voivodeship) and local perspective. From the regional point of view, the Act introduces (based on the novelisation of 2014) functional areas of cities that play the role of regional (voivodeship) centres. Although the term ‘metropolitan’ is not used, these areas can, in fact, be recognised as metropolitan areas. The boundaries of these areas are defined by the regional self-government. The Act allows the adoption of the spatial development plan for these areas as a part of the analogous plan for the whole voivodeship. In order not to prohibit bottom-up initiatives, the Act also allows inclusion in the plan areas outside of the formally delimited functional zone of the regional centre (Kociuba 2015). However, considering the very weak position of the voivodeship plan in the whole planning system and its virtual lack of meaning in local planning system legislation and spatial development practice, it can be concluded that the Polish planning system does not provide any viable planning document for metropolitan areas. Additionally, the 2003 Act does not provide any concrete guidelines for the content of the metropolitan plan other than the guidelines for the voivodeship plan suggesting that the two plans should cover the same issues and themes. However, the voivodeship plan should take into consideration voivodeship development strategy, while applicable regulations do not assume the preparation of an analogous strategy for the functional area. The introduction, in the 2014 novelisation, of new planning documents that can or should be provided for metropolitan areas was not accompanied by a definition of their relation to existing spatial planning documents.

As Mikuła (2015) described, spatial planning regulations focus on delimiting metropolitan areas rather than planning, while management issues are almost completely absent. He also raises questions and doubts concerning the ambiguity and sometimes even contradiction of regulations for metropolitan or functional urban areas. For example, should metropolitan planning be a part of regional planning? If yes, then the body adopting the plan (regional government) would consist mostly of representatives from municipalities outside the metropolitan area since the regional government councillors are elected by all inhabitants of the province (region) and the distribution of seats is proportional to the population in electoral districts. At the same time, the role of local governments in procedures for preparing and adopting the metropolitan spatial plan is very limited. Additionally, in the Polish planning system, municipalities are not hierarchically subordinated to the voivodeship in the field of spatial planning, thus the planning regulations at the regional level may not translate into local planning law.

As mentioned before, in the Act on Spatial Planning and Development metropolitan area issues are also addressed from the local perspective through regulations introduced into the Act in 2015 as a consequence of the Act on Metropolitan Unions (see also the last part of the chapter). According to these regulations, the metropolitan union prepares for the whole metropolitan area a spatial planning document called the Metropolitan Study. This determines the rules and areas of development of transport systems and infrastructure, as well as environmental protection. It also defines the maximum extent of areas designated for building development. The Study is not

considered as a local planning law act, but as a binding document for municipal authorities when preparing analogous documents at the local level. Nor are the latter local law acts, although they bind local authorities while preparing local spatial development plans that have the power of local law. Since today in Poland, only one formal metropolitan union exists (the Silesian Metropolitan Union) and it is relatively new (2017), experiences in the application of metropolitan studies are very limited; thus, it is difficult to assess their effectiveness in metropolitan spatial planning.

In October 2015, the newly elected Polish president signed the Act on Metropolitan Unions. It was passed by Parliament just before the end of the term of office of the government that was in opposition to the president. It might be supposed that the problem of managing metropolitan areas in Poland was so urgent, that even political differences ceased to matter. However, subsequent decisions of the newly elected government, representing the same political option as the president, showed that it might rather have been the small importance of that Act that induced the president to sign it. The Act of 2015 introduced a new form of legal entity called Metropolitan Union that was allocated the task of managing the largest cities and their surrounding areas. The Act established a legal tool that was a framework for collaboration between large cities and their surrounding municipalities. The union was guaranteed independence and legal personality, and was supposed to be created by the Council of Ministries. The Act recognised the metropolitan union as an association of local governments located in a given metropolitan area, which in the meaning of the Act means a spatially cohesive zone of influence in a city that is the seat of the voivode or voivodeship parliament, characterised by the existence of strong functional connections and inhabited by at least 500,000 residents. The main competences of the union were spatial planning for the whole metropolitan area, strategic development planning, as well as organisation of metropolitan public transport. In opposition to previous practices, the Act represented the first operational rather than strategic top-down instrument providing for metropolitan management. However, under the 2015 Act, not a single metropolitan union was created. The law has been broadly criticised by the new government (elected in 2015) as ineffective in the creation and management of metropolitan areas. The Act was repealed in 2017 and replaced by regulation regarding a specific metropolitan area—the metropolitan union in the Silesian voivodeship. The government also presented a proposal for organising the Warsaw metropolitan area, but it has never left the proposal stage.

7.3.3 Integrated Territorial Investments as a Result of Cohesion Policy

In the situation of a lack of proper metropolitan policy, the first really effective management tool in Polish metropolitan areas was introduced via implementation of EU Cohesion Policy, in the form of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI). The new instrument of the 2014–2020 financial framework was introduced in order to

support large, comprehensive and territorially integrated investments and became an effective measure for establishing cooperation between administrative units in Polish metropolitan areas. In Poland, ITI is implemented in the functional urban areas of all voivodeship cities (17) as well as other subregional centres (7). The programme provides 6.2 billion euro for projects related to: sustainable transport; restoration of socio-economic functions in deprived urban areas; improvement of the natural environment; promotion of energy efficiency and low-carbon strategies; strengthening symbolic functions that build the international character and supra-regional importance of the functional urban area; improving the accessibility and quality of public services and strengthening research, technological development and innovation. In practice, ITI became, above all, a form of supporting inter-municipal cooperation in the area of public transport.

In order to receive EU funds, ITI unions had to be established. Creation of the unions required the delimitation of urban functional areas, at least in the regional centres where ITIs were obligatory. The central government proposed delimitation criteria and defined 18 functional urban areas at the voivodeship level. This provided a basis for establishing ITI areas, but the rule was that the ITI area should cover minimum half of the municipalities proposed by the Ministry. ITI regulations are quite flexible in terms of the form of the ITI union, and in Poland, different functional areas decided to choose various organisational forms for their operation. 9 out of 17 regional unions take the form of more institutionalised associations, while the rest, usually less experienced in inter-municipal cooperation, decided to cooperate on the basis of a much looser form of agreement. In addition, the procedure for delimiting ITI areas was diversified. In some cases, regional governments adopted criteria proposed by the Ministry, in others it was based on previous collaboration experiences, while in several regions an expert approach was adopted (Kociuba 2017a). Previous research (Kaczmarek and Mięka 2007; Kaczmarek 2010, 2014; Lackowska 2009b; Danielewicz 2013) revealed a rather low cooperation culture among Polish municipalities, as well as within metropolitan areas, and numerous legal and political obstacles, including personal antagonisms between local leaders. It can be assumed that these factors prohibiting cooperation between metropolitan local governments did not disappear completely once the ITI instrument was introduced. An effective means of breaking down barriers was equipping the instrument with funds—an element that was lacking in the former top-down initiatives. However, as a number of studies show, work on establishing ITI unions usually meant initiating cooperation between municipalities, rather than building on previous experiences in this respect—in accordance with the logic that project should create partnerships, while the desired mechanism should be the opposite (Janas and Jarczewski 2017).

All the ITI unions were obliged to prepare and implement ITI Strategies listing integrated and inter-sectoral projects indicated for financing. However, the strategies very often support non-integrated or even unconnected projects of local rather than metropolitan importance. Additionally, although theoretically ITI unions should cover functional urban areas (the core city and its functionally connected surroundings, affected, e.g. by urban sprawl), much of the ITIs include a large share of rural areas. Only one regional centre (Kielce) preceded the implementation of ITI with an

analysis of suburbanisation processes. Analysis of ITI implementation supports the thesis of a low culture of strategic territorial planning and management, as well as the dominating game of interests in these processes in Poland (Kociuba 2017a). On the other hand, ITI has not only effectively triggered the cooperation potential within Polish metropolitan areas but also, in the absence of a real metropolitan policy at the national level, has become an important factor in regional and urban development in Poland. This refers not only to the role of distributing EU money, but also to competences in the strategic development planning of functional urban areas (Kociuba 2017b).

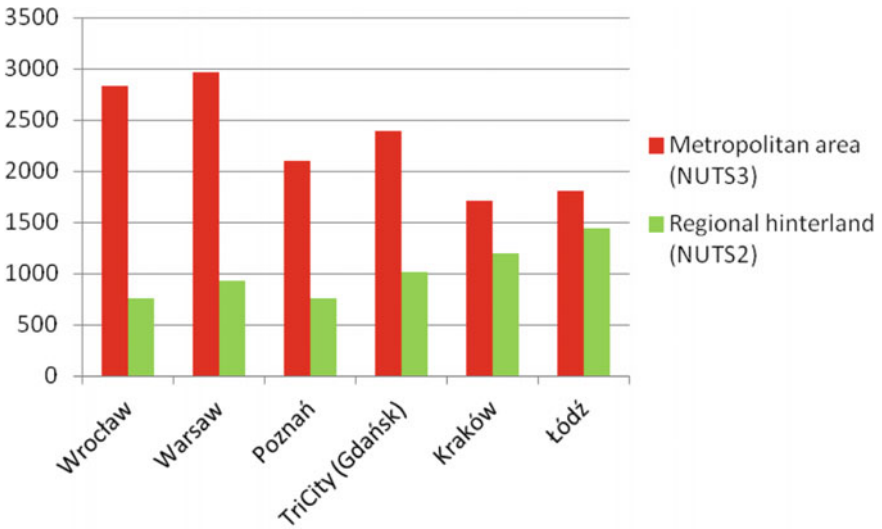
7.4 Metropolitan Macro-regions as the Arena of Intra-regional Policy

A side-effect of the administrative reform of 1999, which had a positive effect on the emergence of relatively strong regions capable of pursuing an active development policy (e.g. Kaczmarek 2016), was also the creation of a potential conflict between the needs of large regional capitals and the peripheral parts of their metropolitan macroregions. While—as shown above—the tendencies towards increasing polarisation were halted in the case of those regions with particularly large income stratification, in the case of other growing metropolises these tendencies became more visible.

Whether, and to what extent, public intervention can be used to overcome these differences is shown by the analysis of Cohesion Policy funds allocation in the 2007–2013 programming period (Fig. 7.2). Based on European Commission data from 2014 (over 90% of allocated funds), a clear concentration of Cohesion Policy funds per capita in metropolitan areas versus regional hinterlands could be observed. It was least visible in the metropolitan regions of Łódź and Kraków, where the intensity of allocation per capita was comparable both in the metropolises and their regional surroundings. The differences between the metropolis and the region in terms of the allocation of Cohesion Policy funds in relation to their GDP were also smaller in Warsaw and Poznań in comparison to funds per capita approach. However, the visible advantage of the metropolis over the regional hinterland in the case of Wrocław and the Tri-City did not change significantly also in terms of the share of EU funds in regional GDP.

To what extent the importance of the metropolis, as well as the problem of intra-regional disparities, were reflected in regional development strategies is analysed based on two representative case studies. The first is the Lower Silesia region, which is a clear example of the concentration of Cohesion Policy funds in the metropolitan area of Wrocław; the second is the province of Lesser Poland, in which European funds were relatively evenly distributed between the Krakow metropolis and the remaining part of the voivodeship, both per capita and in relation to the economic potential of the constituent parts of the metropolitan region.

(a) EUR per capita



(b) % GDP in 2014

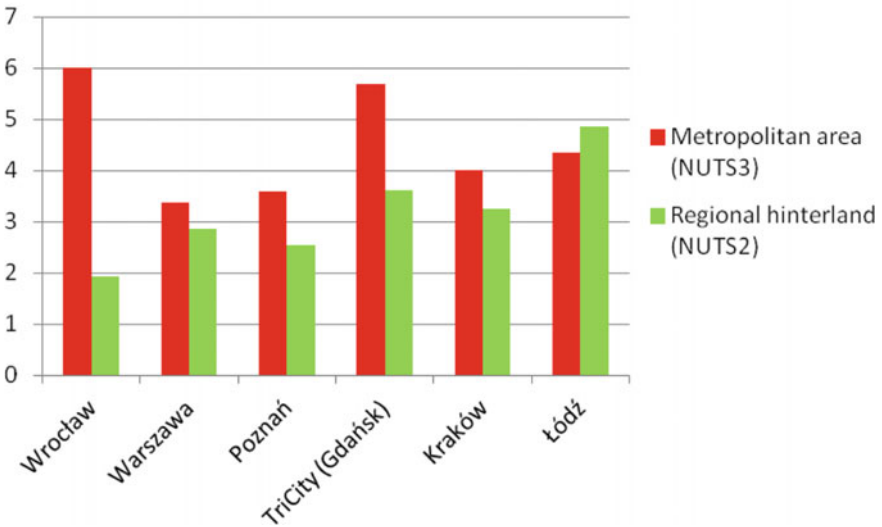


Fig. 7.2 Cohesion Policy funds allocation in metropolitan regions in the programming period 2007–2013. *Source* Authors' elaboration based on EC (2014). **a** EUR per capita, **b** % GDP in 2014

7.4.1 Lower Silesia (Wrocław) Region

According to the development strategy of the province of Lower Silesia (Marshall's Office Lower Silesia 2013), Wrocław, together with its metropolitan area, is a strategic area of intervention focused primarily on the creation of an integrated transport system. The strategy calls for the integrated management of the metropolitan area, which was hindered, among others, by the catchment of communes located in surrounding voivodeships. The strategy also highlights the threats of chaotic suburbanisation, resulting in the degradation of the rural landscape and insufficient access to public services in urbanising areas.

The strategy attaches great importance to the metropolis-region relationship in the context of the backwashing of development resources from the hinterland to the metropolis '[Wrocław is] *an attractive and recognisable metropolis, but in which the effect of resources backwashing from the regional surroundings is clearly visible*' (Marshall's Office Lower Silesia 2013). In particular, this concerned the depopulation of bordering subregions. Attention was also drawn to the existing intra-regional animosities related to the previous administrative division. As a remedy for the growing intra-regional differences, an increase in transport cohesion is pointed out, especially in the context of linking peripheral areas with Wrocław as the main centre of economic growth. Mobilisation of the local development resources of these areas is also indicated, based on the innovation and creativity of small- and medium-sized enterprises, as well as the development of tourism.

7.4.2 Lesser Poland (Kraków) Region

The development strategy of the Lesser Poland province (Marshall's Office Lesser Poland 2011) highlights the importance Kraków as a gateway for the region's contacts with the external environment and a place concentrating advanced services and the knowledge-based economy. Therefore, the population growth and spatial development of the metropolitan area of Kraków is expected. The negative aspects of uncontrolled suburbanisation are observed, indicating the need to implement integrated spatial planning. The strategy also points out the threats to revitalisation projects posed by the planning process resulting in the loss of population in urban centres. At the same time, the potential that the dynamically developing metropolitan area of Kraków offers for shaping a proper spatial structure of this area is recognised.

In the Lesser Poland (*Małopolskie*) Voivodeship strategy, the growing differences between the metropolis and the regional hinterland are recognised: '*The area of the Małopolskie Voivodeship was divided into two parts: the central zone [metropolitan area of Kraków], which was dominated by population growth and depopulation of the periphery*' (Marshall's Office Lesser Poland 2011). Owing to the problems of transport accessibility in peripheral parts of the region, partly due to their submountain location, the strategy points out the need to strengthen access to public

services offered by subregional centres, as well as to improve the transport system for supporting urban–rural relations.

7.4.3 Different Approaches to Metropolis–Region Relationships

Summing up, both strategies indicate the key importance of the regional capital city metropolitan area for the development of the whole region (see also: Wójtowicz 2014). However, despite the smaller scale of intra-regional differences in the Lower Silesia province, more attention is paid to their growth in the development strategy of the region. At the same time, it should be noted that this did not translate into the allocation of Cohesion Policy funds in the period 2007–2013, which showed the highest concentration in Wrocław metropolitan area among all the surveyed regions. Conversely, in the Lesser Poland province, despite the emphasis on the importance of the metropolisation processes taking place in Kraków for the development of the region, relatively more funds were allocated to the regional hinterland. However, an important common feature of both strategies is the emphasis on the European aspirations of the regions, while being aware that development policy will be implemented mainly on the basis of the regional operational programme aimed at the use of Cohesion Policy funds.

7.5 Bottom-up Initiatives for Metropolitan Area Management

This part of the chapter addresses the relevance of bottom-up initiatives for Polish metropolitan area management. It does not cover the whole range of grassroots activities, but rather seeks to explore how these activities are created and what kind of results they bring. In order to depict this process, the paper traces the evolution of bottom-up activities, but also investigates and highlights some complexities and changes they have caused.

7.5.1 Drivers of Bottom-up Initiatives

To unwrap the background of grassroots initiatives and understand how they were set up in Poland, one has to consider their incubation within the long and vague process of metropolitan area formation. Bottom-up initiatives grew out of popular disappointment with the policies of the central government and their failure to effectively address the problems of metropolitan areas. These problems were expressed

for the first time by the mayors of the largest Polish cities, who in 1990 founded the Union of Polish Metropolises (UPM). The mayors believed that because the challenges facing Polish metropolitan areas are rooted in politics, their solutions also can be found there. Given the variety of metropolitan problems, a few issues have been identified as increasingly important by the UPM.

First, urban areas, as vivid examples of entities in transition, are in a need of mechanisms that provide more coherent development and reduce spatial, economic and infrastructural barriers in metropolises exposed to abrupt changes. Thus, a cohesive long-term metropolitan agenda, as yet still hampered by a lack of holistic planning, is indispensable. The second burning question is to abate the legal contradictions to metropolitan areas that emerge at the national level. Third, the key and all-embracing question is to reassert the significance of inter-municipal cooperation between core metropolitan cities and their surroundings. This starts from awareness that such collaboration not only stimulates metropolitan development, but it can also help solve specific urban problems. This argument partly stems from a widely accepted belief that 'different problems require political units of different size' (Dahl and Tufte 1973: 135). Therefore, what is needed to sustain metropolitan development from below is a diversity of initiatives that would open up new possibilities for neighbouring urban areas, not just the core metropolitan city.

This, apart from socio-economic, legal and spatial drivers, requires additional stimuli in order to improve metropolitan governance and make grassroots cooperation something more than just an ostensible tool. Hence, one of the goals of the UPM was to promote initiatives that create local and regional structures emerging in metropolitan areas. In this way, the UPM was supposed to be a forerunner for putting territorial governance on the political agenda and for giving a boost to the involvement of local leaders in bottom-up activities. However, according to Swianiewicz and Lackowska, the problem with the UPM was that '*for a long time it seemed that the issue of co-operation within the wider metropolitan area was pursued mostly by the Union office rather than undertaken spontaneously by its individual members*' (Swianiewicz and Lackowska 2007: 317). In that sense, the initial goals of the UPM were of a declarative nature that later became real incentives for bottom-up initiatives.

7.5.2 Examples of Grassroots Activities and Their Aftermath

In Poland, bottom-up collaboration has taken three legal forms. The most powerful are unions (*związki*). Then come associations (*stowarzyszenia*) and agreements (*porozumienia*) (Kaczmarek and Ryder 2015). In 2018, there were 313 inter-municipal unions in Poland, of which over 40 functioned in larger urban areas, and only six in metropolitan areas (Ministry of the Interior and Administration 2018). Regardless of their legal form, strong and weak bottom-up initiatives have been developed. Strong bottom-up metropolitan cooperation is based on deliberate and intentional contracts between entities which create the metropolitan area. Weak bottom-up initiatives arise from informal structures such as forums or consultative bodies, which usually act as

an advisory body (Kaczmarek and Ryder 2015). The temporary character, particularism of interests, free-riding tendencies, breach of trust, lack of results and tensions over the inner structure of the body responsible for cooperation have been identified as the main causes of the underperformance of grassroots initiatives (Lackowska 2009a). Since the understanding of some complexities is only a stepping stone to conveying the trajectory of bottom-up activities, it is also important to go beyond the main obstacles and focus on the creative forces that have supported strong initiatives in Poland. In a few cases, these forces are rooted in joint activities which have proved to be focused on providing specific services to metropolitan areas, e.g. public transport, technical infrastructure, waste collection and water resource management.

There have been a number of bottom-up initiatives in Polish metropolitan areas. While some of them have succeeded, others have been less effective, e.g. the Committee for the Strategic Plan for Wrocław Agglomeration or the Association of the Warsaw Metropolis (Swianiewicz and Lackowska-Madurowicz 2012). In order to show how bottom-up arrangements fit into specific metropolitan area management, a few examples related to Katowice (also known as the Upper Silesian urban area), Poznań, and the Tri-City metropolitan area (Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot) are presented. Two of them, Katowice and Poznań, are often considered to be the most thriving initiatives. The last example (Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot) has been recognised as less rewarding. The evolution of the above initiatives has a peculiar dynamic and deals with constraints that vary across the given urban areas.

7.5.2.1 Upper Silesian Urban Area

The Upper Silesia conurbation area initiated the first metropolitan-wide and long-lasting bottom-up effort in Poland, which after years has been crowned by top-down metropolitan union law for the Silesian region. It started in 1991 with a grassroots initiative aimed at delivering public transport for 23 municipalities of the metropolitan area. In order to provide an integrated service, the Inter-Municipal Transport Association of Upper Silesia was created (Swianiewicz and Lackowska 2007). The Association established an integrated ticket system which guaranteed a high-level of coordination among different transport suppliers. Since Silesia is one of the most urbanised areas in Poland, inhabited by over 2 million residents, this initiative has been of vital significance for further integration of the whole Silesian agglomeration. In order to improve cooperation, 14 cities in 2007 created the Metropolitan Association of Upper Silesia (usually referred to as the Silesian Metropolis). The members of the Association at first attempted to develop integrated public transport and waste management. They also focused on applying for EU funds. Their most significant success was the joint purchase of electricity at wholesale prices for its members (Mikula and Kaczmarek 2017). A few years later, the Association convinced the Polish government to include some of its demands in the metropolitan law, which was approved in 2017. The new law resulted in enlarging the Silesian Metropolis into the first Polish Metropolitan Union—the Upper Silesian and Zagłębie Metropolis (Pyka 2018).

The union consists of 41 Silesian municipalities. In order to ensure an adequate level of funding, the union receives, apart from membership fees, 5% of the income tax contributed by its residents. Although the first Polish metropolitan union is entitled to perform tasks in the area of spatial planning, social and economic development, coordination of public transport and promotion of the metropolis beyond its borders, it is too early to fully estimate its effects. Yet, the given example provides evidence to suggest that management of metropolitan area from below requires stronger inducement and association with top-down stimulants.

7.5.2.2 Poznań Metropolitan Area

The Poznań metropolitan area has, for a long time, been characterised by a grassroots approach to integrated management (Kaczmarek 2017). The Poznań Metropolis is inhabited by over 1 million residents and it exhibits intensive suburbanisation processes. Thus, when embarking on a new coordination structure, Poznań started with bilateral municipal agreements which emphasised the importance of empowerment instruments in developing metropolitan policy from below. The agreements were basically focused on supplying public transport, emergency medical services and sewage disposal (Mikuła and Kaczmarek 2017). In 2007, the city of Poznań and 17 suburban municipalities established the informal Poznań Agglomeration Council, which in 2011 was transformed into the Poznań Metropolis Association. This new legal entity was created by the city of Poznań and 21 surrounding municipalities in order to give the Poznań Metropolis a position of its own. The main goal of the Association is the implementation of the Poznań Metropolis Strategy 2020. This document gives priority to joint spatial planning, public transport, environmental protection, labour markets, competitive business initiatives and cooperation of the metropolis with a consortium of local universities coordinated by the Metropolitan Research Centre. The effects of the Association's efforts to achieve more coherent metropolitan development have been reflected in the Concept of Spatial Development Trends for the Poznań Metropolis. In 2017, the Association established the Metropolitan Planning Commission which is responsible for giving opinions on the compliance of local planning documents with the provisions of the Concept (Kaczmarek 2017).

Some results of bottom-up activities triggered by the Poznań Metropolis Association have been achieved through the joint committee of waste management and Poznań Metropolitan Railways (PMR). The latter started to provide services in 2018. Based on the Metropolitan Railways Master Plan, these services are expected to be developed throughout the entire Poznań agglomeration by 2021. Another outcome of bottom-up initiatives is that the Poznań Metropolitan Association has been recognised as a member of the joint board of Integrated Territorial Investments (ITI), which were implemented in the Poznań functional area under the EU Cohesion Policy. Being a member of the board has brought vast benefits, but getting there requires the reconciliation of bottom-up and top-down approaches. According to Kaczmarek and Kaciuba (2017), it may be difficult for Poznań metropolitan area to achieve its goals without enabling legislation.

7.5.2.3 Tri-City Metropolitan Area

Gdańsk and Gdynia are two port cities located 20 km apart on the Baltic Sea in the Gdańsk Bay. These two centres, together with Sopot create a metropolitan area which is called the Tri-City and is inhabited by over 740,000 residents. A few attempts to form strong metropolitan bottom-up initiatives between Gdańsk and Gdynia have turned into a competitive relationship which has sometimes become antagonistic. Nevertheless, Gdańsk and Gdynia have been able to cooperate and in 2006 jointly proposed in their policy agenda the creation of the Metropolitan Transport Union of Gdańsk Bay. The Union has developed a local transport policy with an integrated metropolitan ticket.

Unfortunately, the bottom-up management of the metropolitan area has been hampered by problems over the future governance structure and profound disagreements over the name of the new entity (Sagan 2014). Gdynia wanted to avoid being neglected or dominated by the bigger Gdańsk, and in 2011 left the Union. As a result, Gdańsk and 24 other neighbouring municipalities created the Gdańsk Metropolitan Area, which seeks to engage in joint purchasing and the coordination of local spatial plans. Ultimately, the deadlock between Gdańsk and Gdynia was broken due to top-down incentives given by Integrated Territorial Investments (Janas and Jarczewski 2017).

7.6 Conclusions

The processes of metropolisation, which Florida (2018) calls ‘urbanised knowledge capitalism’ are, in the case of Poland, conditioned primarily by external factors related to the inflow of foreign capital. Metropolisation and the accompanying sub-urbanisation are of key importance for the transformation of spatial structures on all analysed spatial scales, i.e. national, regional and subregional, which pose a number of challenges for public policies implemented at different hierarchical levels.

So far the national-level policy regarding metropolitan areas has been rather ineffective and it is unlikely to change. Political discussions and numerous declarations (also in the adopted strategic documents and policies) do not translate into concrete legal or organisational solutions. This applies to metropolitan areas management, as well as spatial and strategic planning. The metropolitan issues are used in contemporary political struggles, including between public authorities at the central and local level. The scarce regulations regarding metropolitan areas are inconsistent and do not form a coherent legal framework for the formation and operation of metropolitan areas. While EU policy instruments have some potential to fill this gap, implementation in practice is based on the *money-led* (rather than *objective-led*) approach.

The impact of policies implemented by regional self-governments on the relationships between metropolises and their regional hinterlands are quite limited. Based on

the analyses of public interventions implemented in six metropolitan regions, including desk research of regional development strategies in two of them, it is difficult to indicate the dependencies between the pace of metropolitan development and the scale and dynamics of intra-regional disparities, as well as the actions of regional authorities. However, it should be concluded that public intervention in the form of projects co-financed by Cohesion Policy funds usually favours development processes taking place in metropolitan areas, and the key importance of the metropolis for the development of metropolitan regions is reflected in the regional development strategies. However, the improvement of transport accessibility in peripheral areas, implemented within the framework of national policies, may have a relatively greater significance than regional policy on diffusing development to the regional surroundings of metropolises.

The lack of a top-down policy of metropolitan area management has resulted in the haphazard development of bottom-up initiatives at a subregional level. Relying on the asymmetric power relations existing between the national, regional and local levels of governance, the bottom-up initiatives have been largely focused on place-related and infrastructural activities, with only very superficial involvement in the broader policy agenda. Such initiatives have not only become emblematic of some metropolitan areas, but they also represent a type of approach that local authorities were incapable of developing mainly due to the lack of effective legal and financial tools. These constraints explain why grassroots' activities have been only moderately relevant to the challenges of metropolitan areas. The few examples presented in this chapter indicate that the intertwining of bottom-up initiatives with top-down incentives seems to be to a more pragmatic approach to solving some of the problems of metropolitan areas.

It should be noted that despite a proper diagnosis of the existing problems, strategies and programmes developed at different hierarchical levels are usually of such a general nature that they do not serve to concentrate resources to take action on a scale appropriate to the problems encountered. This inadequacy also results from the implicit primacy of fully exploiting external development resources over the pursuit of the highest possible effectiveness and efficiency of the implemented measures. As a result, in the absence of national strategic initiatives, the available financial resources are mainly used as own contributions to projects financed by EU programmes, which clearly subordinate the policies to implementing objectives defined at the European level.

The development of metropolitan areas is also often hampered by the lack of appropriate legal instruments that can solve existing problems, especially related to the complexity of management issues. As a result, the situation is conducive to the functioning of pragmatic local coalitions, which mainly focus on spending EU funds, while spontaneous bottom-up cooperation faces a number of barriers.

In summary, in recent years in Poland the importance of the metropolitan agenda in public policy can be seen at all hierarchical levels, although the present national government emphasises the need to develop small and medium-sized cities rather

than metropolitan areas. So far, however, an effective means of addressing existing setbacks remains an unresolved problem. This situation is also related to the diversity of metropolitan needs depending on the hierarchical level, the context of a given territorial system, as well as the lack of decision in prioritising the economic and spatial dimension. In addition to external factors related to the low effectiveness of implemented policies, which are more focused on investment than regulation, internal factors related to the reactivity of implemented policies can be pointed out, which altogether reflects the semi-peripheral position of Poland in the global economy.

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Part III
Metropolitan and City Regions Agendas

Chapter 8

Locating Urban Issues in German Policy-Making: Metropolitan Regions and Urban Development Policies in a Multi-scalar Context



Carola Fricke

Abstract This contribution explores the emergence and relevance of urban and metropolitan issues in German national policies. In particular, the contribution draws attention to policy shifts, first, toward metropolitan regions in the mid-1990s and, second, toward cities of all sizes in the mid-2000s. Methodologically, the contribution builds on the qualitative-interpretive analysis of policy documents and insights into selected expert interviews. Thereby, the comparison of urban and metropolitan policies in Germany proposes an innovative perspective on the complementarity of metropolitan regions and cities as issues emerging on the political agenda and as actors in the policy-making process. Moreover, analyzing the underlying processes of conceptual and instrumental innovation contributes to understanding the influence of institutional and ideational mechanisms on policy shifts. Theoretically, the analysis reflects on German urban policy-making as a complex process in a multi-scalar system involving communities of practice between academics, applied research institutes, national ministries, federal states' governments and representatives from the municipal level.

Keywords Metropolitan regions · Urban development policies · Multi-scalar system · Policy shifts

8.1 Introduction

Currently, problems and politics in German cities are controversially debated in the wider public (see for instance the special issue 'Stadt' in the journal *ApuZ*, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung 2017). Urban issues such as housing, municipal debts and city rankings continue to attract the interest of politicians, media and citizens. This new wave of attention toward cities stands in a long tradition of dealing with urban questions in numerous disciplines. In the 1980s and 1990s, German academics were pointing to a crisis of the city—perceived as a social crisis related

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to segregation (Häußermann and Siebel 1979: 620ff)—coining an understanding of cities as hotspots (*Brennpunkte* according to Heinelt and Wollmann 1991) with a negative and problem-oriented view.

This contribution traces two recent shifts in German urban policies since the mid-1990s toward a positive framing of urban issues: first, the introduction of ‘European metropolitan regions’ and, second, ‘national urban development policies.’ The following sections will first analyze the appearance of metropolitan regions in the mid-1990s when national spatial planning introduced the concept which drew new attention toward the potentials of large city-regions. To some extent, this conceptual innovation implied a shift in the perception of ‘the urban’ in Germany. Scholars mainly focused on the trajectories of ‘metropolitan regions’ as an ambivalent concept in the planning debate. Schmitt (2009), for instance, studied the emergence of metropolitan regions as a social construct and argued that particular actors and constellations supported the discursive process. Bege (2010) traced the disciplinary origins of metropolitan regions as a concept in planning, geography and politics. Hesse and Leick (2016) proposed a discourse-analytical perspective on positions and argumentations on metropolitan regions in the context of the German spatial planning principles. Moreover, Gravert and colleagues (2013) studied the careers of dominant themes in the German planning debate with a focus on agenda setting as a political process. Less attention was paid to the emergence of metropolitan regions as the result of agenda setting in a multi-scalar system.

This contribution analyzes the second shift that took place in the early-2000s. During this period, urban issues re-emerged on the national policy agenda and several observers identified an urban renaissance in Germany. For example, Gornig and Geppert (2004) were speaking of a re-urbanization trend regarding the economic potentials of large cities. Adam and Sturm (from the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development, BBSR 2011) explored the link between the new attractiveness of cities and population growth. This positive framing of cities paved the way to enhance the recognition of urban issues in national policies in the mid-2000s.

Considerable research has been devoted to cities as territorial jurisdictions coining a formal understanding of municipal politics (*Kommunalpolitik*).¹ Under the label of local policy research (*Lokale Politikforschung*, see for instance Heinelt and Wollmann 1991; Heinelt and Mayer 1993; Häußermann et al. 2008), scholars contributed to a progressive perspective on local policy sectors such as housing, social welfare or environmental policies. Less attention has been paid to national policies on urban issues, with the exception of Bogumil and colleagues (2008) who focus on the emergence of urban questions on the political agenda in the context of national urban development policies. In addition to these scholarly accounts, the policy debate is characterized by applied studies and policy briefs on urban issues in Germany from

¹see Häußermann (1991), for reflections on local self-government; see Dieckmann (2001), for an overview on responsibilities dedicated to cities in the German constitutional law; see Benz (2012), on the positioning of cities in German federalism; and see Heinz (2018), for a timely account on the municipal room for maneuver.

research institutes or international organizations (see among many others OECD (1999) and for more detail below).

While previous studies have examined metropolitan regions and urban policies separately, it is important to consider the relationship between policies for metropolitan regions and policies which address a broader range of urban issues. Accordingly, this contribution explores the emergence of metropolitan regions and cities of all sizes as complementary issues in the German political process. Thereby, we draw particular attention to agenda setting in the context of the institutional structures and knowledge communities.

In concrete terms, this contribution describes and analyzes the trajectories of urban and metropolitan concepts in German national policies since the mid-1990s. More precisely, two main questions are addressed. First, how have urban and metropolitan policies in Germany developed at the national scale since the 1990s and what were the key concepts of major policy shifts? The focus on concepts' trajectories builds on the assumption that the debate on urban questions—proposing a balanced view on cities of all sizes—evolved complementary to the mantra-like interest in metropolitan regions—according to Leber and Kunzmann (2006) a metropolitan fever. For explaining these dynamics, a second, subordinate question addresses how key actors, institutional structures and alliances influence policy-making in the German multi-scalar system. Thereby, the analysis of German understandings of 'the urban' contributes to the edited book's overall focus on processes and actors producing urban agendas.

Methodologically, the contribution builds on a qualitative-interpretive analysis of policy documents, selected expert interviews and previous findings on the emergence of metropolitan policies in Germany (see Fricke 2017, forthcoming). Moreover, with this interpretive approach to case studies, the contribution adopts an inductive research design, which attempts at making sense of findings in the light of existing theoretical approaches. Accordingly, comparison and theoretical interpretation of the concepts and policy developments will be suggested after the empirical descriptions of the two policies.

The contribution is structured as follows. The section hereafter gives an overview of academic definitions and conceptualizations of 'the urban' in the German context. Section 8.3 describes the emergence of metropolitan regions as an innovative concept in the federal spatial planning principles in the mid-1990s. Section 8.4 then describes the emergence of the national urban development policy which developed an integrative approach toward cities of all sizes in the mid-2000s. Section 8.5 compares the main characteristics of the two policies presented in the previous sections. Section 8.6 consults theoretical approaches that contribute to explaining the relevance of the institutional context and ideational mechanisms. The final section draws conclusions and sketches potential lines for future development.

8.2 Locating ‘The Urban’ in the German Academic and Political Context

The urban is a realm of daily encounter for the majority of the German population. At the same time, German academics have suggested a plethora of definitions and concepts of the city. Siebel (2010: 3) notes that ‘a dialogue on the city in general would not be reasonable. Too diverse are the realities that hide behind the short word city.’² Accordingly, Rink and Haase (2018: 473–474) assume that the number of urban concepts or city labels will continue to increase in the coming years, due to ongoing urbanization processes, emerging urban problems, policies, socio-spatial processes and technological development.

With regard to the multiple and varied meanings of ‘the urban,’ this contribution focuses on the particularities how German national policies address urban and metropolitan issues from a policy-analytical perspective. And again, the academic debate omits to provide a coherent understanding of urban policies. According to Heinelt (2013: 185), research on local policies in Germany mainly focuses on cities without a clear definition of the urban. Heinelt (2013: 187) suggests defining urban policy in distinction to municipal policy (*Kommunalpolitik*), which focuses on the legal-administrative context. He coins an understanding of urban policies as being linked to a physically and locally bounded, socio-spatial system of interaction. In line with this progressive understanding of urban policies, this contribution suggests defining national urban policies as programs or approaches at the federal level that explicitly address urban issues and problems. This includes a variety of policy fields, such as spatial planning, building and housing regulations and social welfare. This understanding of urban policies includes not only policies with an urban label but also includes approaches that address urban issues beyond an administrative or formal understanding of the city as a territorially defined jurisdiction or a container space (see also Heinelt 2013: 193).

Accordingly, the following analysis focuses on cities not only as isolated territorial units in a hierarchically ordered governmental system. It also proposes a perspective on urban policies as involving vertical, inter-governmental and horizontal relations—between the city and its surroundings and between the political sphere and the wider society. Accordingly, policies addressing metropolitan issues and in particular the introduction of European metropolitan policies in the mid-1990s can be subsumed under such an understanding of urban policies.

²All translations from German are provided by the author.

8.3 The Emergence of Metropolitan Regions in National Spatial Planning Strategies³

Since the rise of metropolitan regions in spatial planning, the concept's understanding and relevance have shifted considerably. The emergence of metropolitan regions represented a conceptual innovation overcoming the previous orientations of German spatial planning which nurtured a problem-centered view on agglomerations. Previous understandings of city-regions have to be understood in the context of the German spatial planning system established after the Second World War. Spatial planning in Germany originally pursued the objectives of balanced development and equal living conditions (see among others Blotevogel 2001: 162). These objectives were embodied in federal planning regulations and spatial plans of the federal states, which supported an equal division of functions in line with Christaller's system of central places. The general planning objectives and instruments coincided with a focus on the negative effects of agglomerations (*Ballungsräume*). In order to compensate for agglomeration effects, planners aimed at balanced functional areas (*ausgeglichenere Funktionsräume*, see Marx et al. 1975).

In the mid-1990s, several conditions enabled the concept of metropolitan regions to gather momentum in the German spatial planning debate. The openness of the concept contributed to a certain euphoria among German academics and practitioners, particularly in the field of spatial planning. Moreover, several aspects created a favorable context for the introduction of a new concept. Germany's balanced urban system lacked a primate or world city comparable to London or Paris. The progressing European integration process thereby opened new perspectives beyond the national borders and inspired the symbolic reference to Europe. In addition, reunification made it necessary to reconsider the relations between the larger agglomerations in East and West Germany. Meanwhile, several larger cities had developed distinct traditions of city-regional cooperation in special purpose association or in regional planning associations between municipalities.

The concept of European metropolitan regions (*Europäische Metropolregionen*) first appeared in the context of spatial planning documents at the federal level. In this initial phase, the main actors were federal ministries, research institutes and representatives from the federal states (*Länder*) and metropolitan regions.⁴ In 1992, the orientation framework for spatial policy (*Raumordnungspolitische Orientierungsrahmen*, MKRO 1993) introduced the principle of decentralized concentration. This apparent oxymoron allowed for a dualistic understanding of city-regions as problematic areas coping with negative agglomeration effects and, at the same time, as key locations for spatial development. In 1995, the action framework for spatial plan-

³The subsequent section largely builds on the empirical findings of Sect. 6.2 in Fricke (2020).

⁴The ministers from the federal states gather in the Federal Conference of Ministers for Spatial Planning, *Ministerkonferenz für Raumordnung*, MKRO. Supported by a national ministry and the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development, *Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung*, BBSR, the MKRO agrees on the national spatial planning principles.

ning policy (*Raumordnungspolitischer Handlungsrahmen*, MKRO 1995) explicitly coined the term European metropolitan regions. The subsequent spatial planning report (*Raumordnungsbericht*, BBR 2000) strongly connects to several principles suggested in the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP) from 1999 such as polycentric spatial development beyond the so-called pentagon in Western Europe. Therefore, the spatial planning report (BBR 2000: 212) refers to the concept of a polycentric urban system which allows strengthening metropolitan regions and urban networks.

The introduction of European metropolitan regions can be interpreted as a conceptual innovation, creating positive attention for larger city-regions in Germany. This involved a reframing from a functional-analytical perspective on city-regions as agglomerations to an understanding of metropolitan regions as political-symbolic decision-making centers and motors of economic growth. While this positive connotation was rather new in the German context, it aligns with concurrent academic approaches toward cities as growth poles or hubs for economic development. Accordingly, the concept was rhetorically embedded in a wider debate on global or world cities (cf. Adam 2006: 12). Later, metropolitan regions were framed as a hierarchical level in addition to the existing system of central places (see Petrin and Knieling 2009: 308).

Metropolitan regions were introduced as an abstract, symbolic concept. Beyond the mentioning in federal spatial planning documents, the establishment of metropolitan regions had no comprehensive legal basis. Some observers feared that the initiators of metropolitan regions intended to launch a territorial reform of the federal states in disguise (Diller 2014, 2016). Yet, the concept did neither involve territorial reform nor additional funding (Zimmermann and Heinelt 2012: 69). A position paper of two national associations in the field of spatial planning, on the contrary, demanded even a more pragmatic approach to the governance of large city-regions (ARL and DASL 2004). Nevertheless, the positive connotation of the term and its open, voluntary and non-binding character gave new impulses to the governance of German city-regions. The planning principles (MKRO, Geschäftsstelle im BMVBS 2006: 14) allowed organizational models in metropolitan regions to vary by letting the regions define their spatial perimeters themselves.

After the introduction of metropolitan regions into the German spatial planning principles, several observers and practitioners criticized the accompanying paradigmatic change (see for an overview Hesse and Leick 2016: 9ff). Academic critique mainly concerned the approach's overall neoliberal orientation toward economic competitiveness (Federwisch 2012: 57) in combination with the disregard of rural and peripheral areas (Leber and Kunzmann 2006). Moreover, non-metropolitan actors, such as the German Farmers' Association and the German County Association (Deutscher Bauernverband and Deutscher Landkreistag 2006), rejected the focus on larger urban areas and suggested strengthening rural areas (see also Kawka and Staats 2016: 353).

As a result, the 2006 spatial planning principles adopted a conciliatory stance in order to balance opposing voices that criticized the overemphasis on large city-regions (Harrison and Growe 2014: 14). Subsequently, the federal ministry respon-

sible for spatial planning introduced two alternative concepts. First, urban–rural partnerships (*Stadt-Land-Partnerschaften*) presented a dualistic understanding of cooperation between cities and their rural surroundings. Second, the concept of large-scale communities of responsibility (*großräumige Verantwortungsgemeinschaften*) proposed even wider cooperation areas, intending to conciliate between urban centers and peripheral areas. Both concepts can be interpreted as attempts by federal actors to reframe the concept of metropolitan regions in order to make it broader and more inclusive. While urban–rural partnerships became a topical subject in the context of the preparatory action of the European Union on urban–rural linkages (European Parliament et al. 2011), the large-scale approach remained less pertinent in practice. Both concepts contributed a more inclusive understanding of metropolitan regions. In line with these developments, the 2016 spatial planning principles used metropolitan regions as one spatial category among others instead of an exceptional category. The text still refers to metropolitan regions as economic motors, yet the formulations moreover include other subspaces and rural areas.

In terms of their overall orientation, metropolitan regions' trajectory in German policies resembles a pendular movement. The concept represents a shift from a previous orientation toward balanced spatial development to a growth-oriented, back to conciliatory approaches of spatial balance and solidarity (see also Schmitt 2009). The concretization of the metropolitan concept in programs and projects, however, does not appear as a linear development. Two main story lines are underlying the career of metropolitan regions in Germany. The first story line developed around city-regional coordination and problems between the core and surrounding areas (Zimmermann and Heinelt 2012: 61). The second story line developed by referring to the economic competitiveness of large agglomerations (Scholich 2009: 30f). The combination of both parallel story lines produces a reconciling dualism between the internal and external orientation of cities, between economic growth and spatial integration and between the center and the periphery (see Aring and Sinz 2006: 48; Scholich 2009: 31).

In the mid-2010s, the euphoria for metropolitan regions lessened at the federal level. Metropolitan regions remain a category in the federal spatial planning principles, yet there are fewer federal programs offered specifically for metropolitan regions. Nevertheless, representatives from several metropolitan regions continue to work together in a network initiative (*Initiativkreis Europäische Metropolregionen in Deutschland*, IKM). Particularly, metropolitan regions with consolidated and institutionalized forms of governance, such as Stuttgart, Hannover and Hamburg, remain actively engaged in the national and European policy debate. Metropolitan regions with more flexible or privately led organizations such as Rhein-Neckar or Nuremberg continue their activities including marketing and informal coordination. Some of the regions such as Rhein-Ruhr, Central Germany or Berlin-Brandenburg show a lower level of activities. This overall declining attention toward metropolitan regions is moreover situated in the context of the appearance of national urban policies for cities of all sizes in the mid-2000s.

8.4 Shift Toward Cities of All Sizes in National Urban Development Policies

The mid-2000s marked a turning point for urban policies in Germany. Due to the previous lack of an explicit national program on urban development, the national level only occasionally cooperated with cities on urban issues, for instance, in the joint program labeled ‘social city’ (*Soziale Stadt*) initiated in 1999 (see Dangschat and Hamedinger 2005: 323 and 326f) and urban redevelopment programs focusing on the built environment (*Stadterneuerung*). In 2007, a new national urban policy for cities of all sizes (*Städte aller Größenordnungen*) gained momentum. The national urban development policies (*Nationale Stadtentwicklungspolitik*, NSP, see BMI 2019) represented an attempt to coordinate political approaches toward urban questions. Bogumil et al. (2008: 120) describe this integrated approach toward cities as part of a new discourse in urban policies.

A number of initiatives paved the way for this new discourse. An experimental format named *Ideenwettbewerb Stadt 2030* (competition for ideas on the city 2030, 2000–2004, see BMBF (2004) for an overview of the results) provided ideas for integrated approaches to urban development, involving pilot projects and a research consortium. Additionally, the renaming of the federal ministry into Ministry for Transportation, Building and Urban Development in November 2005 expressed an increased political will to position urban issues on the national agenda (cf. Güntner 2007: 111; Bogumil et al. 2008: 124). In 2007, the Leipzig Charta as a policy document at the European level represented a starting point for an urban development policy at the national level (cf. BBSR 2017).

The national urban development policy was designed as a coordinative framework. A national memorandum of policy makers and a parliamentary resolution contributed to the formation of the NSP as a framework for vertical and horizontal coordination. The joint program was initiated by actors on the federal level and involves vertical cooperation with partners from the federal states and representatives from local government associations. Moreover, the initiative involves horizontal coordination between departments. One of the NSP’s intentions was to reinforce the public interest in urban issues and raise awareness among national ministries:

At the national level, all ministries should realize that cities play an important role for achieving national, regional and local objectives and that their sectorial measures have effects on cities. (Hatzfeld and Jakubowski 2008: 132)

Currently, the program is led by the responsible national ministry and involves ministries from the federal states.

National urban development policy in Germany follows an integrative and integrated approach. First, the initiative is integrative by involving cities of various sizes. The specific programs address small- and medium-sized cities, which are considered to be particularly relevant for the development of rural areas. Second, cities themselves are framed as integration machines and as places of social and economic integration. Third, the initiative pursues an approach of integrated urban development. It intends to incorporate various urban issues, such as social aspects (employment,

education), civil society, economic development, the built environment and climate adaptation. Critics have raised doubts whether sectorial fragmentation nevertheless remains an issue (Bogumil et al. 2008: 125), due to focus on the competences of the responsible ministry at the time.

Overall, German national urban development policy largely relies on soft policy instruments, such as best practice, calls for projects and communication platforms. The idea of best practice is to improve existing programs (for example *Städtebauförderung*, urban restructuring) without regulations or additional resources. The project-based approach (e.g., in the research program *Experimenteller Wohnungs- und Städtebau (ExWoSt)*, experimental housing and urban construction) follows a similar logic by financing innovative examples of urban development. The platform element intends to foster communication through publications, exchange of knowledge and stakeholder involvement at seminars, workshops and annual events. Stakeholder involvement can also be interpreted as an institutionalized opening for interest representation in the policy-making process. Thereby, the continuous consultation of stakeholders and researchers takes place in formats such as annual congresses and university days. While early voices feared a proneness to a depoliticization of the topic through public involvement (Hatzfeld and Jakubowski 2008: 131), the initiative's openness allows for flexible thematical adaption to current problems.

In the mid-2010s, urban issues—such as the perceived housing crises and the integration of an increased number of migrants—gained public attention. Yet, these issues are not primarily addressed in the national urban development initiative. For instance, in 2017 the government reorganized ministerial competences so that urban issues were again dispersed to various ministries, including the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry for the Environment, Nature Protection, Building and Nuclear Safety.

8.5 The Metropolis is Dead—Long Live the City?

The two previous sections describe the emergence of metropolitan and urban issues on the German policy agenda. The metropolitan region as a concept appeared in the national spatial planning principles in the mid-1990s and evolved, as described in Sect. 8.3, around a positive understanding of agglomerations as drivers of economic and spatial development. Thereby, metropolitan regions can be interpreted as a conceptual innovation. A comprehensive approach toward urban issues appeared, as Sect. 8.4 describes, in the mid-2000s addressing cities of all sizes and, in particular, small- and medium-sized cities. This national urban development policy followed an inclusive and integrated approach toward urban development. The national framework can thus be interpreted as a coordinative attempt to bundle a variety of programs on urban issues.

Table 8.1 compares the metropolitan and the urban as two policy concepts with regard to their main characteristics in the German context. The comparison attempts

Table 8.1 Contrasting selected characteristics of German policies for metropolitan regions and urban development

	Metropolitan policies	Urban policies
Main policy approach at the national level	Spatial planning principles	National urban development policy
Key concept	Metropolitan regions	Cities of all sizes
Auxiliary concepts	Agglomerations, city-regions, urban–rural areas	Neighborhoods, district centers, deprived urban areas
Disciplinary origins	Spatial planning (e.g., central place theory), economic geography (e.g., growth poles)	Urban design, sociology, building and housing
Main story line	Metropolitan regions as hubs in networks and seedbeds for economic growth	Integrated urban development by combining social and material improvement
Main logic	Growth, hierarchy	Integration, equality
Dichotomy	Center-periphery	Urban–rural

to voluntarily contrast the two concepts in order to underline their distinctiveness without implying opposition or succession of the two concepts in policy practice.

A common feature of both approaches is their emphasis on urban issues. In line with the observed renaissance of the city and re-urbanization processes, both approaches brought urban issues back on the national agenda. Regarding the context in which the two approaches emerged—spatial planning and urban redevelopment—metropolitan and urban policies appear to be complementary instead of replacing each other.

8.6 Theorizing Agenda Setting in a Multi-scalar Policy Arena

The previously described development of metropolitan and urban issues forms the basis for the subsequent theory-led reflection on agenda setting in urban policies in Germany. The sub-chapters offer an interpretation of the previously described policies. Following an inductive approach to interpretive policy analysis, this represents an attempt at making sense of empirical findings in the light of existing theoretical approaches. The following sections discuss the potential of two theoretical perspectives for explaining the emergence of urban and metropolitan policies in Germany. A first theoretical explanation of these developments is rooted in neo-institutional thinking. According to this perspective, institutional structures and, in particular, the specificities of the German federalism limit the marge of maneuver for national policies on urban and metropolitan issues. The second ideational perspective emphasizes the influence of ideas and knowledge on policy change. Accordingly, the emer-

gence of metropolitan and urban issues on the political agenda can be interpreted as being influenced by policy learning and reframing. Both, institutional and ideational approaches present complementary perspectives for interpreting and understanding the dynamics of urban and metropolitan policy-making in Germany.

8.6.1 *German Federalism as a Multi-scalar Policy Arena*

In order to explain conceptual innovation and the renewal of urban policies in Germany, a refined understanding of the political processes in the German federal system is needed. Thereby, the institutional context is decisive for understanding the influence of particular actors and the marge of maneuver at distinctive governmental levels.

Scholars in political science traditionally describe the German political system with regard to its governmental competences, which are divided between the federal level and the *Länder*. According to the constitutional law, municipalities and cities dispose over the right for autonomous self-administration. However, their status as jurisdictions is not codified in the constitution (see Dieckmann 2001: 16; Benz 2012: 346). In practice, municipalities in Germany have a strong democratic legitimation through the direct election of local representatives. Moreover, municipalities play an important role in regard to taxation and the implementation of policies in the sense of decentralized administration. Despite reforms in the mid-2000s, which attempted entangling shared competences between the federal level and the *Länder*, German federalism still holds potential for political stalemate and gridlock.⁵

The above-mentioned examples of metropolitan and urban issues appearing on the national policy agenda show that German policy-making takes place in a multi-scalar system, which involves federal ministries, the *Länder* governments and interest groups from the municipal level. The development of a national approach toward metropolitan regions or cities of all sizes is therefore not a formalized process in which national policy makers suggest a top-down program. In the case of metropolitan regions, instead, the spatial planning principles are an outcome of the cooperation between ministers of the *Länder*, national ministries and other actors, such as research institutes with an observatory status in the federal conference. National urban development policies are initiated at the federal level and involve various stakeholders and governmental levels.

The findings described above correspond with Benz' (2012: 348–349) account of the new relationship between cities and the state. According to Benz (2012: 353–354), new forms of governance include indirect steering through objectives, standards and competitions. The initiative of national urban development policies makes use of soft policy instruments, such as best practice, knowledge exchange and consultations with stakeholders. Metropolitan regions were differently addressed through symbolic

⁵See Scharpf (2009), for his updated problematization of the *Politikverflechtungsfalle* from an institutional perspective and Kunzmann (2004: 76), for the field of urban policies.

frameworks, knowledge exchange in working groups and monitoring. In both cases, the actors at metropolitan and local level were involved either directly in consultations or through their representatives in municipal interest groups. This corresponds to Dangschat and Hamedinger's (2005) observations of a corporatist involvement of municipalities in decision making at the national level.

The previous analysis also needs to be reflected in the context of the German multi-scalar system, which limits the marge of maneuver for national policy-making. As the examples above show, national policies on urban and metropolitan issues are either coordinative or symbolic in their character. Party-political affiliations play only a partial role, for instance, when urban issues are reassigned to specific ministerial responsibilities after national elections and government formations. In the field of urban policies, cleavages between governmental levels or types of jurisdictions appear to be more relevant for the actors' positioning in policy-making process. Additionally, the influence of particular interest networks or communities of practice (in Germany called *Fachbruderschaften*) explains some of the shifts in metropolitan and urban approaches.

8.6.2 Conceptual Shifts as an Outcome of Policy Learning and Reframing Processes

The institutional context provides only a limited explanation for the emergence of new concepts and innovative policy instruments for urban and metropolitan issues in Germany. Accordingly, this section considers the role of ideas and the influence of individual actors. In the first step, this sub-chapter briefly lays out academic understandings of policy learning and epistemic communities as a frame for the following interpretation. In the second step, the section reflects on the influence of research communities and individuals on metropolitan and urban policies in Germany.

Since the 1990s, the influence of ideas in the policy-making process has been conceptualized in theoretical approaches that focus on the relationship between knowledge and action. One prominent ideational approach is the concept of policy learning suggested by Hall (1993). According to Hall (1993: 278)

Learning is conventionally said to occur when individuals assimilate new information, including that based on past experience, and apply it to their subsequent actions. Therefore, we can define social learning as a deliberate attempt to adjust the goals or techniques of policy in response to past experience and new information.

A more recent systematization by Dunlop and Radaelli (2013: 599) starts from a minimalist definition of learning 'as the updating of beliefs based on lived or witnessed experiences, analysis or social interaction [...].' Radaelli and Dunlop differentiate four forms of learning depending on the level of certainty and the actors involved. In Dunlop and Radaelli's understanding, epistemic communities (Haas 1992) represent one form of learning, which explains policy change through shifts in expert knowledge:

An epistemic community is a network of professionals with recognized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain or issue-area. (Haas 1992: 3)

Besides, other approaches have pointed to implicit forms of knowledge acquisition which influence policy-making, such as communities of practice.

In German urban and metropolitan policy-making, communities of practice's influence become apparent when looking at the extent to which studies by applied research institutes and think tanks contributed to framing the urban and metropolitan regions as policy issues. In the case of metropolitan regions in Germany, academic concepts influenced agenda setting and the subsequent political process. The BBSR, for instance, was importantly involved in the preparation of the spatial planning principles and thereby contributed to the emergence of metropolitan regions as a conceptual innovation. BBSR experts produced several maps that coined the visual and spatial imaginaries of metropolitan regions in Germany. The spatial planning reports (*Raumordnungsberichte*) and other studies, such as an empirical analysis of metropolitan regions in Europe (BBSR 2010), contributed to a refined understanding of metropolitan regions as locations with exceptional functions in the urban system. Moreover, particular associations of researchers and practitioners reinforced but also critically reflected the shift toward metropolitan regions in the late-1990s (see for instance ARL and DASL 2004). To some extent, these developments correspond to a process of social learning and updating of attitudes.

Moreover, these actors did not only promote academic knowledge in the sense of epistemic communities. While they bridged various disciplines, they acted as brokers of applied forms of knowledge. Due to the proximity between applied research and policy makers in German spatial planning, such communities of knowledge *and* practice contributed to establishing metropolitan regions as a positive concept for addressing Germany's largest city-regions (see also Hesse and Leick 2016: 2 and 4). Within these communities, individual actors appeared as *passeurs* between separate arenas, including universities, applied research and ministerial decision-makers (Fricke, 2020). In the context of metropolitan regions, for instance, Blotevogel and Sinz are esteemed to be such knowledge brokers, who contributed to an operationalization of an abstract academic concept into the German planning practice.⁶

In the field of urban development policies, two other types of actors influenced the agenda setting phase. First, representatives from small- and medium-sized cities were key stakeholders and addressees of the national urban development policy. The influence of this type of cities might explain the reframing and conceptual shift in the early-2000s away from larger cities toward cities of all sizes. Second, the consultation of experts was organized formally and transparent in a consortium of federal ministers, *Länder* and municipal representatives, and associations of architects, planners and other experts. In addition, the advisory board involved researchers with expertise in diverse fields of urban development. This organized stakeholder consultation can be interpreted as a form of intentional learning in-between communities, crossing disciplinary boundaries and overcoming parochial perspectives.

⁶See for instance Blotevogel (1998), for earlier publications on metropolitan functions.

8.7 Conclusion

The development of policies for metropolitan regions in the mid-1990s and for cities of all sizes in the mid-2000s in Germany was influenced by the multi-scalar federal system and the communities of practice and knowledge. Those created windows of opportunity for conceptual and instrumental innovation. The shifts in understandings of metropolitan regions and urban issues hint to a general reframing of urban questions in the German policy arena. Similar to the emergence of urban actors in other contexts, such as the EU, the image of the urban as a passive location for problematic issues has been gradually replaced by an understanding of cities as active agents for problem-solving (see also Barbehön and Münch 2017: 4–5). Therefore, the appearance of metropolitan regions and cities can be read as parallel story lines which developed in separate, yet complementary policy arenas. The comparison of the concepts of metropolitan regions and cities of all sizes in the German political context carved out their complementary character. Analyzing shifts in metropolitan and urban policies also showed that they are far from forming a coherent or hierarchically structured policy field.

Furthermore, the analysis of the trajectories of urban and metropolitan concepts in national policies yields insights into how institutions and ideas influence policy-making processes in Germany. German urban and metropolitan policies are characterized by the iterative and corporatist influence of selected interest groups and knowledge communities throughout the policy-making process. Moreover, this contribution revealed some potential explanations for the emergence of urban questions on the policy agenda, such as the German multi-scalar system and the proximity between applied research and the political sphere. Thereby, the contribution showed that agenda setting in policies on urban and metropolitan issues in Germany builds on two mechanisms. First, metropolitan regions and urban issues experienced a certain politization while emerging on the agenda of national policy makers. The debate on metropolitan regions took a rather conflictual path, while the initiative that resulted in national urban development policies was supported by a change in governmental organization and a parliamentary resolution. Second, the policy shifts in both fields were related to specific windows of opportunity. In the case of metropolitan regions, the context of European integration and reunification allowed for a coalition of academics, research institutes, federal governments and ministerial actors to introduce a new understanding of agglomerations. In the case of urban development policies, governmental change created a certain momentum which supported the introduction of a coordinative framework and new instruments.

Finally, what are the implications of this analysis of the appearance of urban and metropolitan issues on the policy agenda for future answers to urban questions in Germany? This contribution shows that the attention toward metropolitan regions has decreased at the national scale and federal policy makers have reduced their activities. Moreover, other issues such as migration, climate change, aging infrastructure and housing are allocated to the responsibilities of diverse federal ministries. This process contributes to an increased fragmentation of competences concerning urban

issues. Accordingly, national urban policies continue to be challenged in creating an integrated and cross-sectorial approach toward the urban.

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Chapter 9

The Rise of the Metropolitan City Region? Exploring the Establishment of New Levels of Local Government in England and France



Christophe Demazière and Olivier Sykes

Abstract This article develops a comparative analysis of the recent processes of creation of metropolitan governments for large city regions in two European countries: England and France. We consider the evolutions which led to these reforms which aim at the reorganisation of the sub-national territories of public action. Although coinciding in time, the new forms of metropolitan government are embedded in specific institutional systems. It is our contention that, far from being a response only to the management of city regions, the institution of metropolitan governments is part of a wider project of the national government of the country concerned. Comparative analysis focuses on the motivations of the main actors of metropolitan reforms: government, parliament and local elected officials. Our analysis then focuses on several key issues: Do the reforms carried out constitute a radical change or do they proceed by successive increments? Are there any *quid pro quos* granted by the state in return for the implementation of metropolitan reforms (for example, greater autonomy and/or financial support)? Finally, we analyse the capacity to act and the spatiality of the new metropolitan governments in both countries.

Keywords Territorial reform · Metropolitan government · Decentralisation · New public management · England · France

9.1 Introduction

Over the past decade, several European countries have undergone institutional restructuring affecting different levels of government (Nunes Silva and Bucek 2017; Zimmermann and Getimis 2017). These ‘territorial reforms’ have modified the

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distribution of allocated powers and/or the geographical area of intervention of local authorities. Sometimes, they institute new scales of action, thus drawing new spatialities for local public policies. These ongoing institutional changes seem to follow on from the movement towards decentralisation which was particularly marked during the years from 1970 to 1990 (Béhar 2015). Decentralisation involves transferring competences and funding from the national government to the local level, giving local officials greater leeway to meet the needs of the population and specific target groups. In various European countries (Spain, France, Belgium and Italy), decentralisation has been a political response to a societal demand for autonomy including for historic regional and national territories (Ismeri Europa and Applica 2010). In the 2010s, territorial reforms have modified the balance of powers by reworking, often under the influence of reforms promoted by national governments and parliaments, the competences, capacities and perimeters of intervention of certain local authorities. This is not necessarily a decentralisation but may be a process driven by a government agenda which seek the reorganisation of powers in the constituent territories of a state. This agenda is carried forward by national legislative and executive powers, but the resulting reconfigurations of territorial governance, may be contested by local authorities who, citing their electorally derived legitimacy; argue for the maintenance of sometimes long-established territorial boundaries and networks. In the French case, Feiertag (2018), drawing on analysis of parliamentary debates and official speeches, points to a search for many, and sometimes contradictory objectives: a desire to enhance the effectiveness of public action, territorial competitiveness, budgetary austerity and greater territorial equality. To this, diversity of objectives is added a plurality of means of implementation and acting. In some cases, national governments claim to want to simplify the nexus of territorial administration. The merger of provinces in Sweden and regions in France, or the abolition of counties in Denmark, illustrates this. Elsewhere, the aim is to provide densely urbanised areas with a more integrative level of action, even if it means adding a level to the hierarchy of local governments. The creation of Combined Authorities in England and the *métropoles* in France are two examples.

Within the context of the territorial reforms introduced above, this text analyses the institution of 'metropolitan governments' (Lefèvre 1998) for large cities and urban areas in France and England. We consider the evolutions which led to these reforms which aim at the reorganisation of the sub-national territories of public action. Our analysis then focuses on several key issues: Do the reforms carried out constitute a radical change or do they proceed by successive increments? Are there any *quid pro quos* granted by the state in return for the implementation of metropolitan reforms (for example, greater autonomy and/or financial support)? Having explored these issues, it will be our contention that, far from being a response only to the management of metropolitan areas, the institution of metropolitan governments is part of a wider project of the national government of the country concerned.

9.2 Research Context and Approach

The type of territorial reform discussed in the introduction is rooted in spatial dynamics that are widely documented in geography and spatial planning. In recent decades, large Western agglomerations have experienced both economic and demographic growth (Scott 2001; Herrschell 2014) and a sharp increase in mobility, increased soil sealing and land consumption, rising socio-spatial inequalities and the emergence of conflicts related to the location of major infrastructure (Kunzmann 2004; Kirat and Torre 2008). In this context, the establishment of a metropolitan decision-making level could provide certain public authorities in large cities with a greater capacity to deal with issues affecting their territory. Such a process of institutional creation may adopt very different modes, ranging from creation by the state—like the *communes urbaines* in France in the 1960s—to a voluntary approach of actors aligning themselves with a territory or forms of negotiated settlement between the state and local authorities (Tomas 2017). Different models of metropolitan governance can be distinguished according to the types of institutional arrangements that produced them (Breuer 2017). Alongside the metropolitan governments created explicitly by the law to deal with the challenges of very large cities, there are in some countries other more selective forms of metropolitan governance such as agencies that have been tasked with managing specific services like public transport, or waste management, over a large area. Metropolitan policies can also simply result from coordination between existing levels of local governments, whether they have the same competences (municipalities, for example) or not (regions, provinces and counties) (Tomas 2017).

The most institutionalised format of governing the metropolis—metropolitan government—is the subject of this chapter. Metropolitan government can be analysed for the scope of its powers, its autonomy vis-à-vis the higher levels of decision-making and its constitutive municipalities and its democratic legitimacy (Lefèvre 1998). Various authors have pointed to the failure, since the 1960s, of attempts to build institutions at this institutional scale (Sharpe 1995; Lefèvre and Weir 2010). Following a comparative approach, developed by Lefèvre (1998) and pursued more recently by researchers such as Breuer (2017) and Breuer and Halleux (2016), we will explore here the metropolitan reforms carried out in two European countries: England and France. England is a nation of the UK, the most centralised country in Europe and, unlike Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, it does not have its own Parliament. For its part, France has experienced decentralisation and more recently several institutional reforms affecting all levels of local government. By comparative analysis, our objective is to gain a fresh perspective, to identify what is essential, but also to isolate what is incidental, in the creation of metropolitan governments. To do this, it is necessary to identify the reasons for the establishment of institutions to govern the metropolitan city regions and to revisit the debates that have emerged within each nation. Although contemporaneous, the new forms of metropolitan government that have emerged in both countries are embedded in very different institutional systems (Sect. 9.3). The comparative analysis will focus on key protagonists in these

processes, including central government, parliament and locally elected politicians, considering that unpacking the motivations and goals of these agencies and actors is key to understanding the new modes of governance put in place (Sect. 9.4). Finally, we will analyse the spatiality of the new metropolitan governments in the two countries (Sect. 9.5). In England and in France, the new metropolitan governments account for 30.6 and 25.1%, respectively of the population of the country concerned.¹ The geographic extent of the area they cover is more differentiated, with institutional metropolises accounting for 8.9 and 2.1%, respectively of the national territories of England and France. Our aim will be to explain these differences in spatial coverage.

9.3 Institutional Systems in Evolution

A classic typology of sub-national government systems distinguishes between northern and southern European models (Page and Goldsmith 1987). The criteria used are the extent of the functions assigned at the local level, the legal discretion left to the local authorities and the access of local politicians to the national government (ibid). In the UK considered to be a ‘northern country’, local authorities are traditionally conceived of as a mechanism for providing local services. Their actions have had to be exercised with reference to statutory duties attributed by Parliament and have often needed to comply with many national guidelines. This situation has evolved gradually with a ‘general power of competence’ for local authorities being introduced by the Localism Act (2011) (Sandford 2016); though its introduction during the ‘austerity decade’ has limited the practical implications of this in many cases. In France, the action of local authorities is based on the conviction that the territories must be administered and developed according to local interests. France appears as a ‘southern country’ where responsibilities and discretion are traditionally weak, but where there is access to central decision-making through the role played by a number of local elected representatives at the national level. However, France has experienced a process of decentralisation that has strengthened the prerogatives of certain levels of local authorities. The UK has undergone a continuous process of reform of grassroots local government, with the aim of centralisation, though a rhetoric of ‘localism’ has emerged in the 2010s.

In both countries, the creation of metropolitan governments is not simply driven by the need to formulate responses at the ‘right’ scale to some of the widely documented challenges facing European agglomerations, in terms of spatial planning or of social

¹For England, the number of Combined Authorities taken into account in this article is those which were established by July 2017. For France, we have taken into account here only the 15 métropoles resulting from the *loi de modernisation de l'action publique territoriale et d'affirmation des métropoles* (law of modernisation of the territorial public action and the affirmation of metropolises) of 2014, leaving aside those that were created in 2017. Indeed, the aim is not to conduct an exhaustive analysis of metropolitan areas, but to compare the national determinants of the implementation of these new levels of government.

development (Scott 2001; Kunzman 2004; Nahrath et al. 2009). The processes of defining a new framework of public intervention are anchored in the history of the institutional system specific to each country. In the remainder of this section, we will successively elucidate three dimensions of the institutional systems of England and France: the evolution of the pattern of local government as urbanisation has developed; the processes of decentralisation or centralisation that facilitate or hinder the emergence of a local capacity to act; the implementation of structural reforms aiming in particular at a greater control of local public expenditure. For each theme, the presentation of each national context will be followed by a comparative summary.

9.3.1 The Territorial Mesh of Basic Communities: Stability or Evolution?

The institutional systems of territorial administration are always part of specific geographic and historical dynamics (Breuer and Halleux 2016). In 2017, England has 55 million inhabitants on an area of 130,000 km², while France has 67 million inhabitants on a surface four times larger (550,000 km²). England is the country which had the earliest experience of the Industrial Revolution; more than half of the population was urban by the end of the nineteenth century. Urbanisation was later in France. Industry attracted rural populations to large cities but also to small towns that benefited from industrial decentralisation (Demazière 2015).

The framework of local government is very different between the two countries. England has a variety of different forms of local administration for large cities, cities or sparsely populated areas. Since 2000, the 33 London boroughs have been joined by the Greater London Authority. The six major metropolitan county areas of Merseyside, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear and the West Midlands are administered by 36 metropolitan districts. Non-metropolitan areas are governed either by 56 single-tier 'unitary authorities', which manage all local services or by a 'two tier' structure of 27 county councils and 201 non-metropolitan districts. The total number of local government areas is small at 353, reflecting mergers in the second half of the twentieth century. The average population of an English local government area is over 170,000 inhabitants and the average surface area is greater than 400 km²; respectively 80 and 25 times greater than the average French commune (Table 9.1). France has nearly 36,000 municipalities, that is, 41% of all municipalities in the European Union for only 13% of the European population. France has not experienced a major reduction in the number of its municipalities. The institutional system of territorial government, designed at the end of the eighteenth century for a rural country, must today cope with the fact that 80% of the population lives in towns and cities.

Perhaps as a result of the context outlined above, in Europe, France presents a strong case of inter-municipal cooperation: all municipalities, whatever their size or geographical position, are currently involved in inter-municipal cooperation (Demaz-

Table 9.1 Municipalities in England and France (2017)

Country	Principal local governments	Number	Average number of inhabitants	Average area (km ²)
England	Metropolitan districts London boroughs County councils Non-metropolitan districts Unitary authorities	353	170,600	404
France	Commune	35,885	1,870	15

Source Office for National Statistics, National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (2017)

ière 2018). For more than a century, the provision of services (water, electricity, public transport, etc.), or the management of waste, was delivered at supra-communal levels which allowed economies of scale. But they remained under the control of the municipalities, which decided every year the amount of grant to be allocated to support their provision. From the 1990s, the French state favoured the creation of *établissements publics de coopération intercommunale* (public intercommunal cooperation institutions—EPCIs) to which municipalities voluntarily transfer resources (such as the tax paid by companies) and major competences such as economic development, culture and housing. These EPCIs are eligible for major government subsidies, which has encouraged municipalities to engage in them. Baraize and Négrier (2001) have described inter-municipal cooperation as a ‘silent revolution’. Although the elected members of these structures are elected at the municipal level and not directly to the EPCIs, the latter must be considered as an important level of French territorial authority, which is progressively replacing the communes.

In both countries, urbanisation has put strain on the long-established, or sometimes even centuries’ old, framework of local government. In England as in other Northern European countries (like Germany, Belgium and Sweden), the merger of local government areas has been pursued, resulting in a less fine-grained territorial government framework. In France, the permanence of the communal map has given birth to an additional intercommunal network, which now applies across urban and rural areas in France.

9.3.2 *Decentralisation or Centralisation?*

The UK remains one of the most centralised countries in Europe in terms of revenues collected and controlled by the state (Ismeri Europa and Applica 2010). Since 1999, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have had their own parliaments that exercise certain powers. On the other hand, England does not have its own national parliament, or assembly, but is administered by the Parliament and the Prime Minister of the UK. Moreover, there is no intermediate level in England between the central

government and the country council, district or unitary authority (Table 9.2). These are traditionally the executing agencies of the central power, acting in accordance with binding directives of the ministries. Their room for manoeuvre, which has become increasingly narrow since the 1980s, is limited to their ability to adapt these policies to the needs and expectations of the populations in their care (Breuillard 2001). The rhetoric of ‘localism’ in the 2010s has done little to reverse this trend against a backdrop of regressive cuts, which have hit some of the poorest local authority areas hardest. Moreover, in the absence of a written constitution, the functions and the territorial organisation can evolve according to the will of the government and the Parliament in place. Many reforms have been taking place for more than half a century, such as the amalgamation of districts, the abolition of some counties, the regionalisation attempt by the Blair government in the 2000s and its subsequent suspension by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010 (Sykes and Nurse 2017).

In France, the regions were created at the beginning of the 1980s, while the *departements* and *communes* constitute a network that goes back to the French Revolution. The institutional system was then centralised, with a prefect, the local representative of the government in each *département*. Local and departmental elected officials were introduced at the end of the nineteenth century, but until the early 1980s, the prefect continued to lead the implementation of central government sectoral and spatial policies, while controlling the actions of local authorities. Since then, France has experienced decentralisation and the centre of gravity of French institutions has moved from the centre to local authorities. The three levels of local government are now freely managed by elected councils, using their own resources (local taxes and other taxes) and allocations from the state. The principle of autonomy extends to relations between the local governments and none exercises control over another. This creates a very complicated institutional system, mocked by some as a territorial ‘mille-feuille’.

In total, the number of levels of sub-national government is varied: very small in England, it reaches the number of three in France, bearing in mind that the structures organising inter-municipal cooperation (the EPCIs) are often considered to constitute a fourth level, given the importance they occupy today in local public policies (Baraize and Négrier 2001). In addition, the capacity to act of different local govern-

Table 9.2 Local Government levels in England and France in 2017

Geographical scale	England		France
	Name	Number	Name
Regional			Région
Sub-regional	County councils	27	Département
Local	Metropolitan districts London boroughs Non-metropolitan districts Unitary authorities	326	Commune

ments is also diverse, depending on the degree of decentralisation in effect. In both countries, the recent institution of a level of metropolitan government is part of this contrasting landscape.

9.3.3 Controlling Public Spending, an Objective Shared Today by National Governments

England was the first country in Europe to implement new public management. Under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher, the reforms launched from 1979 aimed at controlling public spending through major reorganisations of the administration. Local governments were targeted because they accounted for nearly 70% of public expenditure (Breuillard 2001). State grants have been trimmed, and local taxation and borrowing capacity have been regulated (Booth et al. 2007). Subsequently, the government was able to reduce local budgets in authoritarian fashion depending on whether or not the districts achieved spending control objectives. In addition, privatisation policies directly concerned local authorities, in particular as regarded their social housing stock.

In France, controlling local public spending is a much more recent topic. Thanks to decentralisation, local authorities have the capacity to define their own agenda and fund their projects. At the end of the 2000s, spending by French local authorities accounted for 21% of general government expenditure, which is much less than in a regionalised country, such as Italy (31%) (Iseri Europa and Applica 2010). But financial autonomy is high in France: more than half of the local revenues of sub-national governments come from local taxes. The proportion of locally raised funding is about 48% in England (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2018). Many French municipalities have promoted economic and residential development, sometimes generating, within the same agglomeration, territorial competition to attract or retain businesses and households (Hertzog 2015). This competition has resulted in similar public investments (convention centres, business parks, etc.) in neighbouring municipalities. Vertical coordination among the three levels of government is also lacking. An extreme example can be cited in Marseille, where two museums dedicated to Mediterranean culture were opened in 2013, one financed by the municipality and the other by the region (Demazière 2018).

Inter-municipal cooperation has helped to unify public action in the major French cities and their suburbs, but only to a certain extent. Many peri-urban municipalities have grouped themselves into an EPCI in a defensive manner, to avoid being integrated into a larger structure where urban municipalities dominate because of their demographic weight. In 2010, there were more than 2,600 EPCIs for 300 functional urban regions (Geppert 2014). By seeking to eliminate competition between municipalities, the state has stimulated the emergence of more powerful players, the EPCIs. In many cases, competition for employment and local taxation has been

exacerbated within and between urban areas. This was probably a major cause of land consumption in France during the last decade (Serrano and Demazière 2016).

In France, a general effect of the decentralisation laws has been that elected officials have tended to increase public spending in order to respond to citizens' demands regarding the quality of public services. Local government spending rose from 5 to 8.5% of GDP between 1983 and 2013 and according to the OECD (2015), more than half of this rise cannot be accounted for by the new competences it has acquired. In the 2000s, the salary costs of local government increased by about 3% per year due to the increase in the number of employees, inflation-linked salary scales and bonuses (Cour des Comptes 2014). While the national government has continuously supported this growth of local spending by increasing its grants, it changed tack in 2015, reducing subsidies to local governments for three years, and making a return to a stable level of support contingent on efforts to control local government spending. Indeed, the control of public spending has been one of the arguments deployed to justify territorial reform.

9.4 The Establishment of New Metropolitan Governments in France and England

In the previous section, we outlined the historical role of local governments and their strengthening or weakening according to the agenda of the national government. In both countries, these elements provide the backbone of the reforms undertaken over the past ten years to establish or consolidate local governments in for large metropolitan areas. In this section, our analytical framework will address several points. Do the reforms carried out constitute a radical change or do they proceed by successive increments? Are there any *quid pro quos* granted by the state in return for the implementation of metropolitan reforms (for example, greater autonomy and/or financial support)? It will be seen that, far from being a response only to the management of metropolitan areas, the institution of metropolitan governments is part of a wider project of the national government of the country concerned. In England, it is a matter of selective decentralisation on a case-by-case basis. In France, the metropolises are participants in a large-scale territorial reform, which affects all levels of local authorities without removing any of them. The metropolitan government is only one form of EPCI among others and in the final analysis, metropolitan governments are part of a pre-existing institutional system (Table 9.3).

Table 9.3 Position of the Metropolitan Government in the institutional architecture

England	France
Metropolitan district	Commune
	Etablissement public de coopération intercommunale
Combined authority	Métropole
	Département
	Région

9.4.1 *The Establishment of Combined Authorities in England: A Fluctuating Interest for the Local Government of Large Cities*

In England, the question of metropolitan scale institutions is marked by the considerable weight of the UK government. In the 1960s, the reflection on the fragmentation of the local government system led to the creation of the Greater London Council (GLC), then later in the 1970s to the creation of six Metropolitan County Councils (MCC) in charge of addressing strategic planning, transportation, economic development and waste management. Their role was close to that of French *communautés urbaines* (urban communities), created at about the same time. The MCCs operated from 1974 to 1986, before being abolished by the Thatcher government. The Labour Party controlled the MCCs and partly in response to this—and a classic (neo) liberal critique of their effectiveness and expenditure, their abolition became a campaign promise of the Tories during the general election of 1983. This was carried out once the conservative majority was renewed on a tide of jingoism following the Falklands war. Their disappearance led to a lack of a strategic vision for metropolitan areas as different plans were now drawn up by the individual metropolitan districts for their own areas (Sykes and Nurse 2017).

In 1997, the accession to power of Tony Blair led to new reforms, but the big cities were not immediately on the agenda. After granting autonomy to the Celtic nations and establishing Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in England, the government recreated a tier of metropolitan authority for the capital: the Greater London Authority (GLA). Its main responsibility was to develop and adopt a metropolitan strategic plan. Gradually, the GLA acquired responsibilities for transportation, economic development, environmental management, policing, culture and sports, health and energy. In addition, the creation of the office of directly elected mayor and its effects in terms of leadership served as inspiration for the recent reform creating Combined Authorities.

At the same time, the New Labour government's desire to make industrial and urban brownfields a lever for development led to a focus the big cities in the north of the country. The most acute phase of deindustrialisation being over, the latter were considered as the foci of future national growth, around the knowledge economy, innovation and creativity. In the mid-2000s, a number of official papers focused on

functional urban areas and led to a rising focus on city regions and the benchmarking of metropolitan institutions in other countries (Parkinson et al. 2004; Marvin et al. 2006). This attention to big cities was also driven by cooperation between local districts in some metropolitan areas—notably Greater Manchester. In addition, since 1995, the cities of Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield have been part of an English Core Cities Group. This organisation only has an informal status but gives these regional cities higher profile and a certain collective lobbying capacity towards the UK government and European bodies.

In 2009, the Brown government made local district cooperation for transportation and economic development possible by the establishment of Combined Authorities (Table 9.3). After 2010, the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government abolished the regional organisations such as the Regional Development Agencies and implemented a public expenditure reduction programme that targeted local government. In Manchester, the first Combined Authority was created in 2011. It brings together without merging them the 10 districts that had been part of the previous MCC of Greater Manchester. The main responsibilities of the new Combined Authority cover transportation, strategic planning, economic development, urban planning, housing and the police. Meanwhile, the Core Cities Group has continued to advocate for a rebalancing of the national/local relationship by the government, the only solution it sees to meet the challenges of local economic growth, public service reform and better governance (Sykes and Nurse 2017). This approach has had effects at the central level, with the government promoting Combined Authorities. The principle is that the districts wishing to cooperate submit a project to the government, which examines its content and territorial coherence and proposes (or not) to the Parliament the creation of the Combined Authority. A contract granting certain competences and resources (a ‘devolution deal’) is then signed between the government and the local authorities involved. Compared to local districts, Combined Authorities have greater powers in economic planning, urban renewal and transportation and exercise them over a wider territory. The competences attributed to the Combined Authorities and their resources are negotiated on a case-by-case basis between the local actors and the government, so they vary according to the areas. Not all attempts to create Combined Authorities are successful, as shown by the case of Norfolk, whose Combined Authority project was rejected by the government because of the low degree of collaborative action envisaged, or that of the North East, whose districts have disengaged from the project invoking the risks to for public finances of the UK leaving the EU (Cléchet 2018). A law passed in 2016, The Cities and Local Government Devolution Act, allows Combined Authorities to acquire competences decentralised by the state, in addition to those pooled by the constituent districts, and to opt to have a directly elected metropolitan mayor. Six Combined Authority areas elected their mayor metro in May 2017. However, turnout for the election was low, varying between 21 and 34% of the electorate (BBC News 2017). Though such weak democratic participation is not unusual for local elections, leading some observers to go so far as to comment that ‘British local democracy is that of a failed state’ (Jenkins 2018). Still, as of July 2017, there were nine Combined Authorities in total, but another five were under

discussion. In addition, these structures are gaining momentum in terms of competences and the budgets of the Combined Authorities of Manchester and Liverpool each amounted to £230 million in 2017 (Cléchet 2018). Though this needs to be set against the socially regressive cuts in local authority budgets since 2010 which have penalised some of the core metropolitan districts the hardest. Liverpool's local authority has, for example, seen a real-term fall in spending of 32% from 2009/10 to 2017/18 (Thorp 2019). The institution of Combined Authorities may thus allow the government to practice selective decentralisation negotiated on a case-by-case basis with certain areas, but at the same time, it is imposing budgetary austerity on some of the Combined Authorities's constituent local districts and other districts in England.

9.4.2 *The Creation of Metropolises in France*

After a phase of decentralisation that strengthened the various levels of local authorities, territorial reform in France was justified, as in Italy, by the adoption of new public management (Wollmann, 2012). From 2000 to 2014, the annual expenditure of regions, departments, municipalities and EPCI increased from 152 to 247 billion euros, while local public employment increased from 1.5 to 1.7 million. Between 2010 and 2016, two successive reforms of local authorities were carried out; first, by a right-wing government and then, by a socialist government.

The first wave of reform was prefigured by an official report to President Nicolas Sarkozy. Entitled *Il est temps de décider* (It's time to decide), this report published in 2009 proposed the reduction of the number of regions through mergers, comprehensive national coverage of intercommunal cooperation, the setting of a population threshold for any EPCI and the creation of *métropoles* (Comité pour la réforme des collectivités locales 2009). At the time, these measures were not all implemented, many parliamentarians of all sides being hostile. Indeed, until the very recent prohibition of politicians holding multiple offices (2017), many Members of Parliament also headed local governments.² For decades, this has thwarted government efforts to reform the institutional system.

Promulgated in 2010, the *loi de réforme des collectivités territoriales* (law for the reform of local authorities) forced the 2000 municipalities still reluctant to engage in inter-municipal cooperation to join an EPCI. The law also put on the agenda the merger of some EPCIs, defining a minimum threshold of 5000 inhabitants. This policy orientation was continued after 2012 by the socialist government and in fact

²In 2012, 82% of deputies of the *assemblée nationale* and 77% of senators held at least one other elected office. The proportion of parliamentarians at the head of a local executive (mayor or chairman of a county or regional council) was 45% for the deputies and 48% for senators. These figures make France an exception in Europe. In Italy, 16% of parliamentarians hold at least one other elected office, 15% in Spain, 13% in Great Britain and 10% in Germany. In January 2014, the French parliament adopted a law prohibiting the combination of local executive functions with a deputy or senator's post. This law came into force on March 31, 2017.

strengthened since the minimum population threshold of an EPCI was raised to 15,000 inhabitants. From 2010 to 2017, the number of EPCIs was halved, while the proportion of population covered by an EPCI increased from 89.1 to 100%.

In 2015, the *loi portant sur la nouvelle organisation du territoire de la République* (law on the new organisation of the territory of the Republic; often abbreviated to *Loi NOTRe*); clarified the responsibilities of the different levels of territorial authorities, in particular, by removing the clause of general competence for the departments and the regions. The department is weakened being largely confined now to the maintenance of the road network and the payment of social benefits whose amount and rules of eligibility are decided in Paris. The government had even stated the intention to abolish the department as local authority, but it had to back down. However, another reform was carried through, with the number of regions being reduced from 22 to 13, with in addition five regions overseas. At the time, the justification put forward by the government for this reform was the need to establish regions of ‘European size’—i.e. more comparable to those in other European countries.

As regards the creation of metropolises in France, there is also certain continuity between governments of right and left. In 2010, the trend towards grouping together of independent municipalities led to the creation of a special status of metropolis for the biggest of these Paris. Despite opposition from the Ile-de-France region and neighbouring counties, this project was pursued by the socialist government after 2012. The *métropole du Grand Paris* (Greater Paris metropolis) was legally created on 1 January 2016 as an EPCI grouping Paris, the 123 municipalities of the three neighbouring departments and seven other communes—i.e. approximately 7.5 million inhabitants. Similarly, the 2010 *loi de réforme des collectivités territoriales* (law for the reform of local authorities) made possible the creation of a new type of EPCI—called a *métropole* (‘metropolis’)—for any municipal grouping of more than 500,000 inhabitants. The competences were those of a *communauté urbaine* (urban community), to which were added by legal transfer, or by agreement, certain competences of the departments and regions. However, elected officials had in fact wanted to create a *métropole* only in Nice, whose mayor was close to President Sarkozy. Also, in 2014, the *loi de modernisation de l’action publique territoriale et d’affirmation des métropoles* (literally the ‘law for the modernisation of territorial public action and affirmation of the metropolises’) revived the notion of a more integrated form of intercommunal cooperation. Under Article 43 of this, the *metropole* is supposed to lead a ‘*projet d’aménagement et de développement économique, écologique, éducatif, culturel et social [du] territoire afin d’en améliorer la cohésion et la compétitivité et de concourir à un développement durable et solidaire du territoire régional*’ (‘a development project for the economic, ecological, educational, cultural and social development of the territory, in order to improve cohesion and competitiveness and to contribute to a sustainable and equitable development of the regional territory’—author translation). In addition to Nice, the law designated eight ‘*métropoles*’ on the basis of their *communauté urbaine* (urban community) status and their having more than 400,000 inhabitants in an urban area of more than 650,000 inhabitants—namely: Bordeaux, Grenoble, Lille, Nantes, Rennes, Rouen Strasbourg and Toulouse. As mentioned above, the metropolis of Greater Paris has its own bespoke arrangements.

Its governance operates at two levels: the metropolitan level and the territorial groupings of communes in different areas of the metropolitan region. The object of strong opposition from the mayors of Provence, the *metropole* of Aix-Marseille Provence, was created on 1 January 2016. The pre-existing EPCI's were renamed '*conseils de territoire*' (territorial councils) and must be consulted before any decision taken by the *metropole* on territorial planning and local services. With a specific budget, they manage a certain number of powers delegated by the *métropole*. It is ultimately in Lyon, however, that the most complete form of metropolitan governance in France has taken shape. Through a transformation of the *communauté urbaine du Grand Lyon* (the urban community of Greater Lyon), the new *Metropole de Lyon* has absorbed the skills of the Rhône department within its boundaries. Moreover, it is among the *métropoles* the only one to be fully fledged local authority, which will result in the direct election of metropolitan councillors in 2020.

It is difficult to say whether these multiple reforms will improve the implementation of public policies at local level in the short term. Faced with a major public deficit, the socialist government had to take the unprecedented measure of reducing its grants to local authorities by 11 billion euros over the 2015–2017 period. The aim of this was to encourage them to reduce their operating expenses, but most of all there was a drop in public investment. Following the election of President Macron, the government elected in 2017 committed to not lowering grants to territorial authorities, which in practice meant that increases in their operating expenses would be limited to 1.2% per year (Demazière 2018). In addition, it is anticipated that municipalities will choose to transfer more responsibilities to voluntary groupings in order to achieve economies of scale. The *métropoles* illustrate this logic since their creation leads to new transfers of powers by municipalities. There is a strong local appetite for this institutional form since urban areas that did not reach the threshold of 400,000 inhabitants have sought and managed to transform themselves into *métropoles*: three in 2015 (Brest, Montpellier and Nancy), and seven in 2017 (Clermont-Ferrand, Ferrand, Dijon, Metz, Orleans, Saint-Etienne, Toulon, Tours).

9.5 Characteristics of Metropolitan Governments

Work on the emergence or institution of a metropolitan government has identified three main features (Sharpe 1995; Lefèvre 1998). The first concerns a strong political legitimacy, obtained by the direct election of its political representatives. We must distinguish here between the 'inter-communal' model and the 'supracommunal' model. In the first case, the political legitimacy derives from the representatives of the member communes. However, the metropolitan governments need their own political legitimacy so that actions carried out are accepted as they apply to everyone; notably to their constituent local authorities. The direct election of their executives is considered as an essential 'input' (Taylor 2018) element of this legitimacy—i.e. in terms of representation of the governed and consultative mechanisms.

Secondly, the metropolitan government must enjoy significant autonomy vis-à-vis higher levels of government as well as in relation to its own constituent local authorities. This is acquired through adequate financial (and human) resources and significant powers to intervene in metropolitan affairs (Lefèvre 1998). The policy fields generally mentioned are strategic territorial planning, economic development and the management of infrastructure networks (transport, water, sanitation and waste treatment), fire services and culture. Finally, it must have an institutional geography roughly corresponding to the functional urban area. These elements are needed to bolster the ‘output’ legitimacy of the metropolitan government—i.e. its effectiveness in acting in the interests of the governed and its ‘*problem solving quality*’—Schmidt 2013).

These characteristics would allow the metropolitan institution to be legitimate, powerful and autonomous. But there is clearly a gap between such theoretical notions and practice. We will see that the Combined Authorities and the French *métropoles* are both incomplete according to the criteria defined in the literature, but in different ways.

9.5.1 *Size and Geographical Area of Metropolitan Institutions*

Firstly, let’s consider variables that can be measured quantitatively, namely the population and area covered by the 23 metropolitan governments identified in both countries (Fig. 9.1). A strong heterogeneity emerges. Almost two-thirds of the territories have a population of less than 1 million inhabitants (from the West of England downwards) and some in France even have a population of less than 500,000 inhabitants. In addition, the comparison between Sheffield and Lyon shows that population and area are not always correlated. An institutional metropolis covering a large population can be established within a small area, while a large land base does not necessarily mean a major demographic weight. Following the preceding sections, there are also substantial differences between the two states. In terms of population, five out of eight Combined Authorities (West Midlands, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Liverpool and Sheffield) are in the top third of the territories in Fig. 9.1 and none are present in the bottom third. French *métropoles* are divided into two distinct groups. A handful of major cities (Paris, Marseille-Aix and to a lesser extent Lyon and Lille which exceed 1 million inhabitants) contrasts with most others which lie in the bottom third of the graph and occupy the last nine ranks. These different spatialities are not the result of chance. They are linked to the choices made in the reforms which instituted, in each state, these metropolitan levels of action.

Overall, Combined Authorities have an average population of around 1.4 million, compared to 700,000 for French *métropoles* outside Grand Paris. Their area is three times greater than their equivalent in France (2300 against 750 km²). In France, the smallest metropolis-Brest represents 3% of the population of Greater Paris and

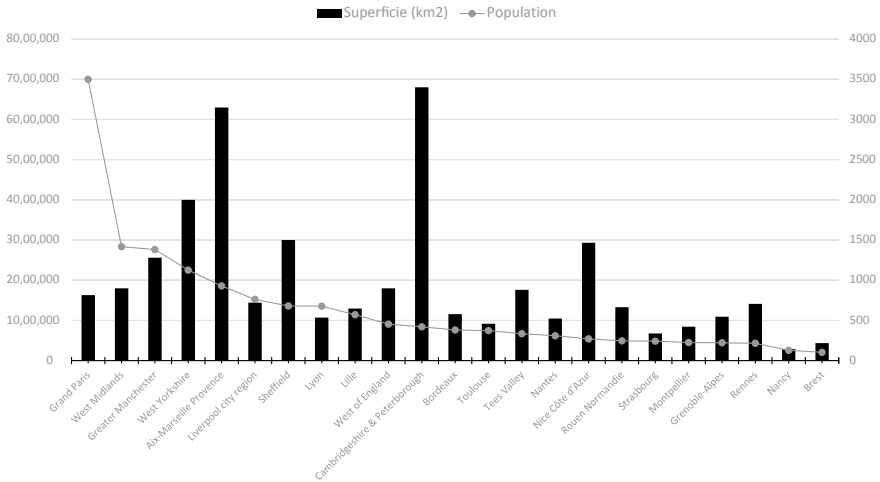


Fig. 9.1 Population and area of combined authorities and Métropoles *Author* Christophe Demazière

Source National data—England: July 2017; France: population on 1/1/2014, area on 1/1/2017

11% of that of Aix-Marseille Provence. And of the 17 metropolitan areas of less than 1000 km² shown in Fig. 9.1, only four are Combined Authorities—these being also the largest among these smaller territories, and the 13 others are all French *métropoles*.

The larger geographical area of the Combined Authorities aims at capturing a functional regional reality. In France, the process of *metropole* creation was essentially a question of renewing the perimeters of pre-existing EPCIs—with the exception of Marseille-Aix and Greater Paris—and not of transforming *départements* into metropolitan authorities. This leads to a major difference: seven French *métropoles* out of 15 have a population lower than that of the corresponding *unité urbaine* (urban unit) and nine have a population less than two-thirds of that of the *région urbaine fonctionnelle* (functional urban region) (Demazière 2017).

9.5.2 A Very Variable Degree of Autonomy

The autonomy of a type of metropolitan government can be assessed vis-à-vis the state, which is often at the origin of its creation and other higher, or lower, levels of territorial government. Below, we examine these two dimensions of metropolitan-regional relations in the two national contexts under consideration here (for a more comprehensive treatment, see Cremaschi et al. 2015).

In England, metropolitan cooperation is presented as taking a ‘pragmatic’ form, with the first step being the coming together of metropolitan districts to negotiate with the state, the business community and civil society around

specific policy goals and projects. As a result, shared, or decentralised competences, differ from one Combined Authority to another, as do the resources allocated by the government. On an experimental basis, some Combined Authorities have been able to keep local business rates paid by companies. Although the rate of this tax is fixed by the government in a uniform manner for the whole country, this constitutes a beginning of fiscal decentralisation. Moreover, in addition to resources related to the transfer of competences—for example, £6 billion of health and social care funds transferred to Greater Manchester—the government has committed itself to funds of around £ 250 million each year for the territories that have signed devolution deals.

The situation in France is different, even if a metropolitan fund with €150 million euros has been set up, its importance is limited because the *métropoles* are part of a long history of decentralisation and reinforced inter-municipal cooperation, which has constantly increased the room for manoeuvre of the local elected officials involved. As far as their relations with the central government level are concerned, the *métropoles* have a much greater autonomy than the Combined Authorities, whether in terms of competences or fiscal resources. Local elected officials can even play a vital role in the creation of the *métropole*. Take for example the lobbying by elected representatives from certain big cities who succeeded in February 2017—thanks to an amendment tabled under the *loi Grand Paris* (Grand Paris law); in modifying the *métropole* designation criteria, allowing a second wave of seven *métropoles* to be created. The list of these speaks volumes of local influence on the process: Clermont-Ferrand, Dijon, Metz, Orleans, Saint-Etienne, Toulon and Tours, being rather intermediate cities as opposed to metropolises (Deraeve 2014). There was an excellent illustration of the effects of multiple offices holding (e.g. the holding of local and parliamentary mandates by the same individuals) on the framework of French territorial governance structures, in this case, only a few weeks before the prohibition of this practice.

The wide autonomy of the French communes and their groupings vis-à-vis the state underpinned the fact that the functioning of the *communautés urbaines* (urban communities)—which prefigured the *métropoles*—was variable in space and time, and with regards to the ‘buy-in’ and inclusion of actors in the project (Lefevre 2015). This diversity is mainly due to the relations between the representatives of the main commune and the mayors of the other communes, with a lower demographic, economic and political weight. In Toulouse or Grenoble, for example, elected officials have feared the hegemony of the central city, something strongly felt in the past, and are wary of an inter-municipal structure that would reduce their control of their own communal territory (Escarffe and Jaillet 2015; Louargant and Le Bras 2015). Conversely, in England, given the merger of the districts in the 1980s, the Combined Authorities only bring together a small number of them—ranging from four districts for West of England to 10 for Greater Manchester. According to Leclercq and Loew (2017), territorial governance is more ‘balanced’ than in France. For example, in Greater Manchester, the population of the local authorities brought together by the Combined Authority (e.g. places like Salford, Trafford, Oldham, etc.) is more comparable than is typically the case of the constitutive *communes* of the French *métropoles*, even if the central city of Manchester still has the greatest demographic

weight. In Manchester, strategic planning and the management of key services have been transferred to the Combined Authority; while in France, this point is problematic for mayors. Yet the transfer of competences and their exercise in practice may be two different things—for example, the production of a Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) has been marked by public protests from those who jealously guard local planning power, notably as regards to any changes to designations of Green Belt land (Green 2019). As regards economic development, in England 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) between businesses and local authorities are supposed to encourage synergies between sub-regional/city regional governance and the business sector. In certain places such as Greater Manchester and the Liverpool City Region, the area covered by the Combined Authority is the same as that covered by the LEP. This is not always the case though and in the West Midlands, three LEPs cut across the Combined Authority area. In theory, these partnerships can play an important role in the decisions of the new Combined Authorities; whereas in the French case, the establishment of *conseils de développement* (development councils) does not apparently lead to joint decision-making.

9.6 Discussion: Governing the Metropolis or the Urban Region?

This section provides a comparative discussion of the findings as presented in Table 9.4.

The first part of Table 9.4 underlines the vital role played by the national government vis-à-vis local and regional authorities. Both France and England actions have been carried over the long term by the national level, in terms of reforms of the framework of territorial government, and the competences and autonomy granted (or not) in terms of financial resources and expenditure to sub-national levels. In both countries, urbanisation and peri-urbanisation have tested the relevance of the established geography of sub-state government, but it has only been significantly reworked and expanded in England. In France, bypassing the fierce resistance of mayors to the merger of municipalities, the state has strongly encouraged and stimulated inter-municipal cooperation. The gradual deepening of the latter in the largest cities has brought into being more and more integrated local institutions, prefiguring the emergence of true metropolitan governments. In effect, the laws of the 2010s only formalised this status, even if, in the case of Greater Paris and Aix-Marseille Provence, the state imposed the metropolitan reform on the municipalities and *departements* concerned.

In both cases, the old relations between state and local governments are both a resource and an obstacle for the institution of a metropolitan level of government. For example, the resistance of other levels of local authorities to metropolitan reform. This was a sensitive issue in France, but several elected officials who simultaneously held the positions of mayor of a big city, president of an EPCI, and parliamentarian

Table 9.4 Institutional context and forms of Metropolitan Government

	England	France
<i>Previous reforms of boundaries and decentralisation</i>		
Reform of local government areas	Yes, in the 1970s	No (failure of a reform in the 1970s) Encouragement of inter-municipal cooperation addressed to all municipalities becoming almost mandatory in the late 2000s Since the 1960s, financial and institutional support of the state to the grouping of communes in the big agglomerations
Decentralisation	No. Decentralisation from the 1970s and a single level of territorial authority	Yes (since 1982). Three levels of local government, including regions created in 1982
State objective of limiting the spending of sub-state territorial authorities	Yes, since the 1980s A decrease in the scope and spheres of action of local authorities	Yes, since 2015. A decrease in state grants to local authorities
<i>Metropolitan government model</i>		
Relationship to constitutive local authorities	Intercommunal model but metro mayor elected by direct universal suffrage (realised in six out of eight cases)	The president of the <i>métropole</i> is elected by the metropolitan councillors, who are also local councillors
Competences exercised	Variable from one Combined authority to another. They are pooled by the districts or decentralised by the government. Competences are limited and often involve urban transport, strategic planning, economic development, urban planning, housing and police	Homogeneous with the exceptions of Greater Paris and Lyon The competences are very significant: spatial planning; economic, social and cultural development; local housing policy; urban policy; protection and enhancement of the environment and local amenity/liveability; management of public services of collective interest
Territorial extent	Large (average area of 2300 km ²) and often centred on the core of the functional urban area	Smaller (average area of 750 km ²), less than the built-up area in the case of half the <i>métropoles</i>

Source Authors

forged an alliance with the government to ensure reform succeeded. In England, the strong culture of centralisation sees Combined Authorities emerge from national legislation under which groups of two or more local authorities may come forward seeking to collaborate and take collective decisions across council boundaries. The success of bids to become a Combined Authority is not guaranteed and they must be approved by the secretary of state, alternatively, the latter may decide to establish a Combined Authority if the councils in the relevant area agree (Sandford 2016). The fields of action and resources of a Combined Authority are granted by the UK government, which then evaluates their actions, illustrating ‘remote government’ (Epstein 2005).

The second part of Table 9.4 summarises, in both countries, the characteristics of metropolitan government considered essential by Lefèvre (1998) and examined in Sect. 9.5 above. The only common feature of the two countries is the importance for the new metropolitan institutions of the relationship to the constitutive local authorities within their areas who are the stakeholders in the new metropolitan governance. In France, the legitimacy of municipalities is strong, which limits the autonomy of the metropolitan government in dealing with them. The metropolitan councillors, who represent the local municipalities, elect the president of the *métropole*, which open the possibility of electing another figure than the mayor of the main core city and municipality of the area. This is the case for Greater Paris, Aix-Marseille Provence, Lyon, Lille—the four largest French *métropoles* by population—as well as for Grenoble, Strasbourg and Nancy. In England, the legitimacy of the districts is much weaker, which has allowed the national government to push for the direct election of a metropolitan mayor, and this has not happened in most, though not all, areas.

In terms of competences, the Combined Authorities seem to illustrate, an experiment in decentralisation in a highly centralised country, which initially has principally targeted the largest cities. The process of case-by-case formalisation of devolution deals is probably less a reflection of the national government’s desire to address the heterogeneity of the issues facing these large agglomerations than of limiting the possibility of a common expression of these claims. Combined Authorities are an experiment to which it is always possible to put an end. In contrast, French *métropoles* are part of a longer-term evolution and have an almost unique set of competences. These are only restricted for Greater Paris, which leaves the organisation of mobility or the tendering of energy networks to the Ile-de-France region. In contrast, the Lyon *métropole* has added to its core fields of activity the exercise within its area of the competences of the Rhône *département* (social action, construction and maintenance of secondary schools and management of the road network). In France, the unique format of modes of action is questionable, given the strong heterogeneity of the *métropoles*. It might be thought probable too, that in the smaller *métropoles*, action in some policy fields will not be very developed, in light of a lack of expertise, or because—despite what may be claimed; some dimensions of ‘metropolisation’ are not very present (Deraeve 2014).

Regarding the boundaries of the institutions created, path dependency seems to outweigh the importance of introducing a new territorial framework well-adapted to

addressing issues of spatial planning. In England, the territorial extent of Combined Authorities is wide. However, the establishment of new relations between the state and the local does not revolve exclusively around the metropolitan spaces of large city regions. Thus, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is a Combined Authority for a territory of interlinked medium-sized cities, and the government has also signed devolution deals with non-metropolitan areas such as Cornwall and Greater Lincolnshire. The level of centralisation and the hegemony of the London agglomeration in the national economy do count for nothing in accounting for the difficulties that the big cities of the North of England experience in being recognised as key sites for future decentralisation-fuelled development. In the mid-2010s, the UK government started evoking the notion of a 'Northern Powerhouse', as an urban ensemble made up of the conurbations of Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and Newcastle. By fostering this group of cities, the stated strategy was to counterbalance London's economic growth. This territory is superimposed on that of the very big cities around which Combined Authorities have emerged and seeks to unite these historically rival cities across the geographical and cultural distance which separates them.

In France, the narrowly drawn boundaries of the *métropoles* created by the metropolitan reform are in direct continuity with the geography of pre-existing forms of intercommunality. It is on this territorial basis that some elected officials have launched, since decentralisation, daring and striking urban projects including urban regeneration operations, tramway lines and business centres. These elected officials sometimes had very high national level political responsibilities, for example, mayors of Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon and Nantes have all at one time led the national government. Perhaps as a result of this, from Lyon to Metz, from Toulouse to Brest, the representation and conception of the *metropole* are urban-centric. It is attached to the (larger or smaller) central city of an urban area and extends little beyond the urban core. This narrowness of the territorial base of the *métropole* still leaves the urban region, or the wider metropolitan area, fragmented at the level of local government. This can make it difficult to cooperate with surrounding areas.

9.7 Conclusion

In geography and spatial planning, an abundant literature has emerged which celebrates metropolitan spaces as centres of innovation, competitiveness and wealth creation (Scott 2001; Parkinson et al. 2004) and points to the multiple spatial issues that call for the setting up of institutions dedicated to their governance (Kunzmann 2004; Nahrath et al. 2009). However, since the 1990s, many studies in political science have shown the difficulties which can accompany the emergence, or creation, of metropolitan government (Sharpe 1995; Lefèvre 1998). In their comparative analysis of institutional reforms in metropolitan areas in Europe and North America, Kantor and Savitch (2010: 129) point out that 'national government responses are by no means a mere reflection of an evolution of economic pressures. On the contrary, regional governance policy is invariably a matter of contention'. The findings of

this chapter confirm these analyses. England and France are two European nations with relatively similar levels of development that face similar challenges. But distinct paths have been taken towards the establishment of metropolitan government. This is explained partly by the interactions between the distinctive national institutional systems, which have evolved over a much longer time period than that over which the recent reforms have been introduced, and the more recent agenda setting of the respective national governments regarding the metropolitan issue. The findings underline the importance of the role of national governments which have orchestrated change over the long term, successively reforming the framework of territorial government, and the competences, autonomy and resources available to sub-national levels. In both countries, urbanisation and peri-urbanisation and new functional geographies have tested the relevance of the established geography of sub-state government, whilst established relations between state and local governments have shaped the emergence new governance scales. At times, there has been resistance to the metropolitan reform from existing local authorities who fear a loss of autonomy, but such antagonism is by no means ubiquitous and in both countries, there were examples of cooperation across and between government scales. The presence of such similar dynamics around the formation of metropolitan governments in two different national institutional and political settings also points to the need to be sensitive to sub-national contexts (e.g. specific city regional settings) and avoid the trap of ‘methodological nationalism’ (Reimer et al. 2014, p. 3) which seeks to account for differences solely in terms of different national systems. Yet some fairly clear national differences remain such as the influence of the relative strength of local municipalities vis-à-vis new metropolitan institutions which are stronger in France and the national government’s encouragement of the election of metropolitan mayors in England. Meanwhile, whilst Combined Authorities can be seen as the latest manifestation of England’s rather stop-start quest to develop some kind of ‘larger than local’ scale of sub-national territorial governance, French *métropoles* are part of a more consistent longer-term evolution of decentralisation processes. Yet the territorial extent of Combined Authorities in England is wide, contrasting with the narrowly drawn boundaries of the *métropoles* which generally remain calibrated on the pre-existing intercommunal spaces and rather urban-centric leaving wider metropolitan areas, fragmented at the level of local government. Ultimately, in both countries, the choices around the spatial bounding of metropolitan governments are based on context-dependent factors. Allied to the competences of the new metropolitan governments, which vary between the two countries and sometimes within the same country, these boundaries will certainly influence the capacity of the public authorities to deal with the multifaceted issues encountered in the development of metropolitan areas. It should be remembered too that far from being solely a response to the management of metropolitan areas, the institution of metropolitan governments in both countries takes place against a background of wider national government political agendas and projects. It is clear that many aspirations and agendas have been attached to the new metropolitan governments. Given this, it is perhaps too early to say, how far they will acquire their own political legitimacy, in terms of ‘output’ effectiveness in addressing the issues which provided the rationale for their

creation, and citizen identification with and ‘input’ to the democratic life of these new territorial institutions.

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Chapter 10

Metropolitanizing a Nordic State? City-Regionalist Imaginary and the Restructuring of the State as a Territorial Political Community in Finland



Heikki Sirviö and Juho Luukkonen

Abstract In this chapter, we study the effects of city-regionalism on state spatiality and on state as a territorial political community in the Finnish context. We conceptualize city-regionalism as an economic-geographical imaginary that has recently emerged as the dominant spatial framework informing national spatial policies and territorial strategies in the context of the capitalist world economy. The effects of city-regional policies and strategies on national economies, on the states' physical spaces, or on the institutional arrangements of territorial governance have been discussed widely in political and academic circles. However, the potential implications of the imaginary of city-regionalism on the state as a territorial political community have received less attention. In this chapter, we seek to fill this gap by scrutinizing city-regionalist policies and discourse in the Finnish context through Hannah Arendt's concepts of politics and political community. We start with the view that a state, even if nationally scaled, is at least potentially a more inclusive and plural form of political community than any city or metropolis. Based on our empirical analysis of the city-regionalist discourse, we argue that city-regionalism is an exclusive and selective imaginary, which builds on a peculiar form of depoliticized politics fueled by particular forms of economic knowledge and rationales. Moreover, the imaginary privileges specific urban localities, issues, and actors as politically appropriate topics of public deliberation and as relevant subjects of national political concern. Accordingly, city-regionalist imaginary not only contributes to the transformation of the state's physical territorial structure but also considerably delimits the public space of politics, the notion of citizen-subject—and eventually, the state as a territorial political community.

Keywords City-regionalism · Urbanization · Depoliticization · Arendt

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10.1 Introduction

The current phase and pace of urbanization are rapidly changing the social and economic form of the cities, and among them, the wider geographical and political configurations. This also raises the stakes in the knowledge production on urbanization that often feeds directly into political discourses on the topic and on the adoption of spatial policies. The most-discussed urban model seems to underline core city economies in a way that ignores problems like spatial and social inequality and uneven economic development—the central concerns of cohesion policies.

In the political discourse, urbanization is often conceptualized loosely as a megatrend and as such, it is simply conceived as a signpost for the direction of future development (e.g., United Nations 2012; Netherlands EU Presidency 2016; City of Helsinki 2019). We take as our point of departure the fact that globally the urbanization is a variegated phenomenon that has multiple and incommensurable causes—not just the “search for a better life” of the liberal narrative, but also processes of expropriation and forced migration—and it will certainly have diverse and profound effects on human societies around the world. For research on the geographies and politics of urbanization, the sheer complexity of the phenomenon necessitates a context-sensitive approach. Enough attention to the spatio-temporal context allows one to track the implications of the urbanization for the state as a territorial political community and for the notion of the human subject, or, from the political and state perspective, the citizen-subject. Our focus here is on the case of post-welfare state Finland, where urbanization is now emerging as the key accumulation strategy, gaining its traction from a competition-oriented political rationality (e.g., Moisio 2018).

We have approached the current urbanization from the perspective of state spatiality and politics. In this chapter, we want to identify and foreground a specific urban agenda, emerging in the context of the debate on the economic future of the Finnish State and consequent questions concerning state spatial policies. We built our research design on a combination of geographical research on city-regionalism (e.g., Jonas and Moisio 2016) and political theory (Arendt 1998). We utilized these theoretical elements to think through the implications of a city-regionalist urban agenda for the state territoriality, political community, and political citizenship in Finland. The academic context of our research is in the debates on state spatial restructuring, political construction of city-regionalism, and depoliticization dynamics (sometimes referred to as “post-political condition,” e.g., Wilson and Swyngedouw 2014), on which we employ the notions of economic imaginary, politics of depoliticization, as well as the Hannah Arendt’s conceptions of political community and citizen-subject, as presented in her major theoretical work *The Human Condition* (1958/1998).

Our interest in Arendt’s work is based on her efforts to account for the erosion of public life in the modern era. Arendt called this process the rise of the social, in which she saw the unhealthy blurring of distinction between the public and the private, but in our view, following the interpretive strategy of recontextualization, it is more accurate to term this process the “economization of public life and space,” as well as

the notion of human subject. This economization produces a peculiar form of politics, which we have termed the politics of depoliticization (Luukkonen and Sirviö 2019). The value of this formulation is in its capacity to identify the form of the “actually existing politics” of our time without succumbing to the very general idea of the “post-political era,” nor relying solely on crypto-normative definitions of politics, of which Arendt’s theory is at times taken to be an example (Jessop 2014, 208). Instead, in our view, Arendt’s concept of politics, tied closely to the theory of action and the spatial notion of political community, established a valuable intellectual—and indeed—coherently and outspokenly normative criterion for analysis and critique of a depoliticization, applicable to depoliticizing aspects of urban agendas. We locate the depoliticizing aspect of the Finnish urbanization discourse in the promotional praxis that articulates a metropolitanizing spatial policy as indisputable execution of economic rationality and as the “common interest” of the Finnish state and its citizens.

The chapter is divided into four sections after the introduction. First, we will discuss Hannah Arendt’s political theory regarding the notions of politics, political community, and citizenship. Second, we contextualize the emergence of the city-regionalist imaginary in the historical development of the Finnish State as a territorial political community. In the third section, we present the main findings of our analysis of the city-regionalist discourse in Finnish public media. The analysis leans on Arendt’s ideas on plurality, shared public space, and the opportunity to make one’s voice heard as essential conditions of the political and of political community. The aim of the analysis was to find out how urbanization and the city/state relations are discussed in the Finnish context, what broader societal questions are associated with urbanization and urban regions in the discussions, and who take part in the discussions. Despite the fact that there are various arenas and discursive fields in which national cohesion, state territoriality, and political communality are discussed, we believe that the analysis of the city-regionalist discourse provides important insights into the reframing of the public sphere and the state as political community in a situation in which the “urban” has become an increasingly important reference point for the societal discussions. In the concluding section, we summarize our key findings and bring to the fore issues concerning urbanization that merit further research.

10.2 Politics, Political Community, and the State: An Arendtian Perspective

In this section, we present an Arendtian concept of politics and political community as a perspective on the current debate on urbanization and the spatial policy of the state. Arendt’s conception of modernity, as presented in *The Human Condition*, seeks to account for the restriction of the public sphere of action and speech (the loss of the common world) in favor of the private individual worlds and the private pursuit of economic interests. We want to revisit Arendt’s interpretation and critique of

the modernity in the context of the current urbanization discourse because some of the tendencies of modern capitalist development recognized by Arendt back in the 1950s are curiously accentuated in the city-regionalist imaginary as a framework for understanding urbanization. Arendt's conception of politics is especially well-equipped to challenge the status of economic knowledge and its depoliticizing effects in the formulation of the urban agenda in Finland. This allows us to reinterpret the economy as a public concern in a way that formulates it as an object of public deliberation instead of a hegemonic knowledge claim. Her central metaphor for political community and public space, the polis, usefully focuses discussion on the relationships between the state and its cities, which is also one of the core concerns of the city-regionalist discourse. The Arendtian view of pluralism as the precondition of politics also challenges the centralizing logic of city-regionalist spatial policies and their predominant mode of subjectivization.

Arendt's work has been arousing interest in geographical research lately, relating to discussions on political subjectivization (Dikeç 2013) and spatial ontology (Debarbieux 2017), for example. For our purposes, the central concepts in Arendt's work are plurality, action, and the public space as conditions of politics, as well as her notion of citizenship and political community. These notions, however, require a contextualization in Arendt's interpretation of modernity, as well as attention to some conceptual relationships that are necessary for proper uptake of their specific meaning.

Arendt's main concern with modernity was "the loss of the world" meaning alienation from the public sphere of speech and action constitutive of the political community. Her negative conception of modernity is in line with Reinhart Koselleck's (1988) account of the pathogenesis of modern society, and with Schmitt (2007) polemic against liberalism, in that they share a common theme of displacement of politics by an abstract and moralizing worldview that removes from sight the standpoint and constraints of practical, political action (Antaki 2007, 252). For Arendt, the root of the loss of the world was in the loss of political authority, which according to her was not to be confused with violence and coercion. This was not just a problem of political philosophy but of Western metaphysics, especially the belief in a truer world in which this world finds its ground. The virtue of authority is to endow the world with stability and to create conditions for exercising judgement that affirms a world peopled by a plurality of fellow human beings. The problem with the metaphysics is the establishment of fixed standards of truth (reduction of truth to certainty) that comparably to violence coerces agreement and extinguishes the dimension of plurality of being-in-the-world typical for humans. This reduces judgement to the application of preexisting rules and precludes the freedom of judgement that is crucial for political action (ibid. 253–254). For our analysis of the city-regionalist imaginary, these aspects of Arendt's thought focus the attention on the city-regionalist critique of the state and the politics grounded in economic expert knowledge, which this discourse tries to endow with the coercive power of truth. The loss of the common world in the state-society-citizen nexus enables the reign of economic rationality that is paramount for the initiatives that seek to metropolitanize the Finnish State.

The central aspects of the loss of the world for Arendt are the restriction of public sphere, the rise of the social, and the victory of the *animal laborans* over *homo faber* and *zoon politikon*—conceptions of human in terms of labor, work, and action. The public sphere of appearance and action is restricted or even eliminated through mental withdrawal to introspection and to the private promotion of economic interest. The rise of the social seeks to account for the erosion of the distinction between private and public and the replacement of both by “the social” that prioritizes the management of life processes of the society. The meaning of social for Arendt is twofold: It refers both to the normalized behavior in mass society (metrics concerning the territorially confined population) and to the rise of bureaucratic collective housekeeping (the economy) (Hyvönen 2017). These two processes have eroded the public space of political action: In the first case, through the production of more or less unanimous public opinion, and in the second case, by transforming economy from a private matter of housekeeping to the central public (or politico-social) concern. The victory of *animal laborans* means the restriction of human activity to the realm of biological and economic necessity, to the processes of production and consumption, which impede both the building of a durable world, and the exercise of political freedom through action.

Both meanings of the social recognized by Arendt, the conformism of mass society and the economization of the public sphere, bear on our concerns with the city-regionalist policy initiatives. The social as conformist behavior relates to the discursive attributes and assumptions of city-regionalism, especially in its construction of the human subject solely as an urban economic actor. The social as the occupation of the public sphere by economic concerns relates to the materialist implications of city-regionalism. We approach the social in the sense of conformist public opinion through the assumptions concerning the citizen-subject and “the communist fiction” (Arendt 1998, 44) of the national general interest as the point of reference. To the other aspect of Arendtian social, i.e., the collective housekeeping of the economy as the dominant public concern and to the consequent process of redistribution of societal power through economic knowledge claims, we refer to as economization (see Çalışkan and Callon 2009).

To offer a critical view of the proper status of economic concerns in the public sphere, we build on an interpretation that Arendt presented a sophisticated account of the importance of economic matters for public life (Klein 2014, 856) that can be used to challenge the understanding of “the economic” in the economic rationality of city-regionalism. To begin with, Arendt (1998, 61) distinguishes between property and wealth, where property refers to tangible, worldly location, forming a durable context for individual belonging and appearing of common things; whereas wealth consists of consumable goods and instrumental objects relating to accumulation process, material necessity, and technical management of things. The reduction of property to ownership and dominion loses its mediating function and thus contributes to the decline of the public sphere. For Arendt, questions pertaining to class, interest, and property form the worldly dimensions of the economic. Thus, against reductive interpretations that encourage viewing the class as a subjective form of consciousness, the interests as subjective preferences, and the property as individual

or collective possessions, these concepts can be mobilized to illuminate each other and to bring out their capacity to mediate between economic necessity and common affairs. In Klein's (2014) interpretation, Arendt's analysis is valuable for realizing the significance of social welfare institutions in democratic politics, for they have the capacity to transform the material necessities into the objects of public action. This interpretation of welfare institutions can restore the worldly mediation to the economic activities and set limits to the reach of accumulation processes. Arendtian ideas have also informed discussion on welfare policies in the past. For example, the prominent Finnish sociologist Erik Allardt (1976) discerned the aspects of welfare as having (material welfare), loving (communality, belonging), and being (sense of purpose, meaningful life), which point to interpretive options in Arendt that allow the incorporation of social and economic issues in her view of the public life.

Central to the Arendtian concept of politics and citizenship is the distinction between labor, work, and action, where labor is tied to the material necessities of life, work to the fabrication of the human world, and action on the condition of plurality and actualization of freedom. By linking action to freedom and plurality, and to dissensual being together, Arendt's conception of politics articulates a notion of participatory democracy, which is antithetical to bureaucratized and elitist forms of politics. Above all, Arendt perceives power as potential which is actualized in public deliberation. This stands in contrast to power sustained by economic, bureaucratic, and military means in the sense that the legitimacy of power derives from rationally binding commitments based on common convictions and a process of fair deliberation. The public sphere is upheld by the force of mutual promise or contract (Arendt 1998, 244–245), and in our interpretation, the contract upholding the territorial and social cohesion of the Finnish State and society, as well as the state as political community, are being challenged by the city-regionalist policy initiatives.

Arendt's conception of human plurality builds on the view that "[...] we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else [...]" (Arendt 1998, 8). This condition of plurality is the enabling condition of politics. Thus, politics concerns the ways people can live together despite their conflicting interests and disagreements. Plurality as a condition of politics is actualized in the situation when people are free to disclose their individually unique opinions and identities. At the same time, this view of individuality is conditioned by the fact of plurality: Human speech and actions gain their meaning from the presence of others. Action, in the sense of making oneself known through words and deeds and seeking the consent of others by persuasion, only exist in a context defined by the plurality (d'Entreves 2019). From this perspective, the city-regionalist reduction of human subject and citizen to an urban entrepreneur exercising economic rationality is deeply problematic. The formulation of spatial policy in terms of the cities and the metropolitan core largely ignores other subjectivities, especially rural dwellers and occupations as well as the working class, thus providing an impoverished understanding of the society and the plural identities and interests that it brings together.

The conception of politics emerging from Arendt's work seeks to establish "a space where freedom can appear as a worldly reality" (d'Entreves 2019). This founding act reflects the artificial and constructed character of politics: For Arendt, politics

is cultural achievement par excellence, not something arising from inherent human nature or natural condition preceding constitution. This view of politics also qualifies the notion of equality: It is precisely because humans are not naturally equal but unequal that they need to form political communities and craft institutions such as the law to establish their equality. From a geographical perspective, the same point applies to the problem of uneven development and disparities between regions. The coercive power of the economic knowledge that forms the political rationality of city-regionalist imaginary works against the political and social achievements of equality. The city-regionalist policy initiatives seek to organize the state space in a way that establish “the natural” supremacy of the economically most successful city-regions against the rest of the country and especially the rural and peripheral regions.

Arendt’s strong emphasis on the spatial quality of politics is manifested in her conceptions of public space, citizenship, and political agency, as well as on her discussion on principles of territorial organization and its justification. First, one must be in some sense present in the public space in order to be part of politics. Second, at least as an ideal type, the common public space conditions political opinions through confrontation and examination of different perspectives so that they cannot be reduced to idiosyncratic preferences, nor to a unanimous public opinion. Third, Arendt saw bounded legal space as constitutive of political community: Legislation creates a space in which it is valid and within which politics takes place (Arendt 1998, 63–64). As political community is defined by this *nomos*, the conception of state territoriality is relevant also for the dynamics of inclusion in and exclusion from the public sphere, and as such for the notion of (political) citizen-subject. The Arendtian metaphor of polis does not refer to a city-state, or in contemporary situations, efforts to concentrate the statehood in a city, but to a public space of action, freedom, and plurality. It is true, however, that the cities have a special role regarding the formation of the public space: People living close to each other, so that the potentiality for action is always present, have made the foundation of cities “the most important material prerequisite for power (Arendt 1998, 201).” Yet in the modern period, the polis is not confined within the city walls, and the spatiality of the political community has to be understood in a more complex manner:

“The polis, properly speaking, is not the city-state in its physical location; it is the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be (Arendt 1998, 198).”

Thus, a state, even if nationally scaled, is at least potentially a more inclusive and plural form of political community, than any city or metropolis. From the perspective of equality and inclusiveness of a political community, there is an oft-neglected side to the territorial state as a political achievement that can bring people as citizens together as a pluralist political community.

10.3 City-Regionalist Imaginary and the State as Territorial Political Community

City-regionalism has become a powerful spatial-political imaginary through which state territorial strategies and the associated policies are increasingly evaluated, drafted, and put into practice around the western world. The growing popularity of the city-regionalist imaginary manifests a wider social change whereby the “urban” has become an episteme of our time which sets “the condition of possibility for understanding major aspects of contemporary global economic, social, and political life (Brenner and Schmid 2015).” Even if the city-regionalism can be identified as the globally dominant imaginary regarding expectations of economic growth and the fabrication of effective accumulation strategies, in the Finnish context, the city-regionalism is an emerging imaginary, which is increasingly hailed by the proponents of urbanization.

The current territorial configuration of the Finnish State’s space and spatial relations is a fleeting moment in a long history of various natural processes and human activities. However, leaving aside the physical geographical preconditions and the early phases of national awakening in the nineteenth century, much of the characteristics of the current state territory result from the period of the “areal state” (c. 1920–1945) and from the period of the “decentralized welfare state (c. 1945–1990) (Moisio 2012).”

The latter the post-World War II period has been especially significant for the development of the state territory and for the formation of state spatial relations. The period marked the construction of the welfare state that was motivated not only by the hegemonic political-economic thoughts of the time—such as the Keynesian belief in the capacity of the state as an agent for national development and economic management, or the belief in the economic growth through welfare state—but also by the need to strengthen the social and political unity of the nation in the politically tense post-war situation (Heiskanen 1977; Kosonen 1998; Puuronen 2004).

The construction of the welfare state was strongly connected with the goal of territorially balanced social and economic development. Accordingly, national industrial, social, and regional policies were explicitly devoted to enhancing prosperity and welfare beyond the economically most developed regions and urban centers. The welfare state project came of age in the 1970s and early 1980s and became manifested in an extensive network of educational, administrative, and other public infrastructures across the state space (Moisio 2012).

A remarkable feature of the construction of the welfare state was that the regional redistribution of resources and decentralization of services contributed not only to the emergence of a scattered spatial pattern of the state territory, but also significantly strengthened the role of the state, both as a territorially operating governing apparatus, and as a privileged scale of identity formation and social adhesion. During the period of the “areal state,” the state apparatus was largely invisible in the regions, and the local was the fundamental site of political struggle and scale of social interaction, integration, and identification (Moisio 2015). However, during the post-World War

II period, the state strengthened its institutional presence at the regional and local levels, which reinforced the idea of the nation state and national territorial identity among the citizens (e.g., Puohiniemi 1993). The state-orchestrated welfare state project had a twofold role both in “social spatialization,” i.e., the social construction of the state as a territorial entity (Shields 1991, 31) and in “spatial socialization,” i.e., the engagement of individuals and collectivities with a territorially bounded spatial entity (Paasi 1996, 8). Accordingly, the post-World War II project laid foundations for political communality geared around the national unity and state territoriality.

From the late 1940s to the late 1980s, the public debate was characterized by a strong political consensus of the state as an internally cohesive territorial and political community and of the need for socially and territorially balanced development. The national projects of strengthening the post-war national unity and the building of the welfare state, as well as the long governmental cooperation of the agrarian and socialist parties, laid foundations for a broad consensus that was rarely challenged publicly by leading national politicians (Eskelinen 2001; Remahl 2008; Moisio 2012). However, from the late 1980s, the principles of national unity and of balanced regional development started to lose traction. The political-ideological transformation toward the neoliberal market- and competition-oriented policies and the historically severe economic recession in the early 1990s generated critique toward the costly structures of the welfare state and led to significant changes in the theoretical and political premises of the national territorial development (Moisio 2012). The state-orchestrated redistributive policies, or the articulation of socio-economic issues and territorial cohesion as common affairs, were challenged by the principles of new regionalism and urban-centered national policies which emphasized urban regions as fundamental spatial units in the global economic competition.

Unlike the current urbanization discourse leads us to believe, investment in cities and urbanization is nothing new in the national territorial politics. Promoting urban growth has been on the national governments’ growth and security political agendas for decades if one looks beyond the narrowly defined national sectoral regional policy (Kiljunen 1979; Moisio 2018). However, there are few qualities that distinguish the current city-regionalism from the “small-scale nationalizing urbanization” (Moisio 2018) that characterized the era of the decentralized welfare state. First, cities or city-regions serve not only a national function as mediators of government policies or distributors of wealth but are increasingly seen as independent international actors, responsible not only for their own success but also for the use of their endogenous capacities and resources for the benefit of the regional and national economies (cf. Luukkonen 2015; Moisio 2018). Second—and perhaps more importantly regarding the notion of the state as territorial political community—the post-1990s city-regionalism has marked a qualitative shift in the city/state relations whereby major cities and city-regions have sought to disengage from their state-orchestrated national position and demand for a stronger national and international political role (Moisio 2018).

Some authors have noted that the recent changes in city/state relations do not necessarily indicate the separation of cities from the state but rather reflect the heightened role of cities and city-regions in the geopolitical strategies of state governments

(Moisio 2018; Jonas and Moisio 2016). It is true that urbanization and urban growth have become essential governing technologies for the state apparatuses in seeking to cope with the global economic competition (Crouch and Le Galès 2012). However, the emergence of city-regionalism signals simultaneously also a more profound questioning of the appropriateness of the territorial state as a form of political belonging and activity. Urban ideologists such as Barber (2013; see also Ohmae 1993) have for years promoted cities as progressive actors and key sites of political and economic life in contrast with states that are portrayed as thoroughly ideological and regressive actors, or as artificial and abstract territorial constructions which do not resonate with people's everyday lives or identities. In Finland, the challenge to the state has not remained at the level of particular academic discourses but has also become manifested at the level of political discourses and practices (see Luukkonen and Sirviö 2019).

The imaginary of city-regionalism builds on few relatively sedimented “post-statal” core assumptions. First, urbanists argue that in the current age of networked society, state powers must—and unavoidably will—be rescaled both vertically and horizontally to new non-statal and transnational and sub-national actors (cf. Rodríguez-Pose 2008). Second, it is argued that cities and city-regions have displaced states as the privileged political and economic actors in the ever-intensifying global competition (Scott 2001). In city-regionalist reasoning, global capitalism operates through the global networks of urban hubs instead of the rigid state territorial system and city-regions are perceived to be functionally and governmentally more agile to operate in the rapidly changing capitalist economy (cf. Ohmae 1993).

In Finland, city-regionalism is promoted through the rhetoric of objective neutrality as a “geoeconomically” inevitable strategy which contributes to the national “common interest (Luukkonen and Sirviö 2019).” While in many ways it is disputable whether and under what circumstances the politics of agglomeration results in national economic growth (e.g., Martin 2008; Gardiner et al. 2011), let alone in whose interest is the national common interest, it is evident that the city-regionalist imaginary is as selective as any other political imaginary (cf. Jessop 2010).

The selectivity of the imaginary has become manifested in the prioritization of economic knowledge claims and expertise over others as well as in emphasizing urbanization and the growth of urban regions as questions of “national competitiveness” and “national survival.” However, even though urbanization is justified through national benefits, city-regionalism which privileges “urban entrepreneurs” as valuable political subjects (cf. Rossi 2017, 167–173) and city-regions as places that matter most (cf. Rodríguez-Pose 2018) undermines the idea of the state as territorial political community. This has become manifested not only in national surveys that show the growing socioeconomic regional differences as the most pressing issues challenging the national unity and equality (EVA 2001, 2016), but also in the increasingly critical voices that question the legitimacy of the current territorial basis of the state and the responsibility of the major city-regions for “feeding” (through the state subsidy system) the rest of the country (Luukkonen and Sirviö 2019).

10.4 City-Regionalist Discourse and the Reconfiguration of the Political Community

In this section, we scrutinize the city-regionalist discourse in Finland. The empirical material consists of 413 articles that were published in the leading national newspaper, *Helsingin Sanomat*, between 2011 and 2017. *Helsingin Sanomat* is a relevant source for analyzing the discourse for two main reasons. First, with a total reach of over 1.7 million readers, it is by far the biggest newspaper in the country. The wide circulation and readership together with its prestige make it the leading national newspaper that is keenly followed by national politicians and other decision-makers (e.g., Kunelius et al. 2009). As such, the paper provides an attractive and credible forum for stakeholders to present their views and interests. Second, at the same time, *Helsingin Sanomat* is also a regional newspaper the printing of which is mainly distributed within the capital region or the region of Uusimaa (Salokangas 1999) and which has a strong focus—and separate sections—on locally and regionally important issues. Accordingly, the newspaper is often deemed to be a mouthpiece of the urban elites of the capital city-region that take an active part in the formation of the national urban agenda and the promotion of urban-centered national policies (cf. Wiio 2006; Kunelius et al. 2009, p. 266).

We have used this material elsewhere for analyzing the politics of depoliticization as the main strategy in the political production and use of city-regionalism as the national territorial strategy (Luukkonen and Sirviö 2019). In this chapter, we have used the material for outlining the main characteristics of the city-regionalist discourse with regard to the potential implications of city-regionalist strategies to the transformation of state as a territorial political community.

In an Arendtian reading, the idea of political community is not based on religious or ethnic affinity, nor on any shared or common value system, but first and foremost on the presence of shared public space and on the possibility of citizens' engagement in collective deliberation within that space. Accordingly, being part of a political community, it presumes one's presence in the space in question. However, it is important to note that the public space, or polis, does not refer only to physical locations, or to the institutions of the formal political structures through which people can participate in the activities of political community, but also to more socially defined "spaces of appearance," in which "men are together in the manner of speech and action (Arendt 1998, 198)." Thus, the engagement or participation in the political life and political community derives from being seen and heard by others.

One of the key goals of national territorial strategies during the era of the decentralized welfare state was to strengthen the loyalty and engagement of citizens to the state. As noted above, this became manifested through various institutional arrangements and policy activities which also emphasized the role of the more peripheral localities as part of the political territorial community. The strengthened political and economic power of city-regions as well as the national government's increased political attention directed toward them since the 1990s have led to growing tensions between different parts of the country.

In scrutinizing the city-regionalist discourse, we paid specific attention to ways in which the relationships between the cities and the state and between the cities and the rest of the country were discussed, how urbanization was addressed, and what broader societal questions urbanization and urban regions were associated with. Admittedly, we have addressed a rather narrow domain of public discussion, and there are various other arenas and discursive fields in which national cohesion, state territoriality, and political communality are discussed. However, we believe that the analysis of the city-regionalist discourse provides important insights into the reframing of the public sphere and the state as political community, especially in the situation in which the urban has become an increasingly important reference point in the societal discussions.

In our analysis, we identified four broader patterns which characterize the city-regionalist discourse in Finland. First, urbanization is discussed mainly as an economic question. As a global phenomenon, urbanization is seen as opening new business opportunities for Finnish industries. In turn, the national urbanization is claimed to increase the productivity, innovativeness, and global competitiveness of the national economy. Furthermore, the concentration of people and activities, i.e., urban growth, was often associated with austerity politics and the need to invigorate and rationalize the geographically spread and costly public sector.

Second, the discussion on urbanization in Finland has been reduced to the question of the role and status of the capital city-region. This is aptly illustrated in the following quotes from the research material:

“This is the region where one third of Finland lives and works. This is the region where around 40 percent of the Finland’s gross domestic product is developed. If this broader Helsinki [city-region] withers and becomes stale, the whole region and the whole Finland will lose.” (14.4.2012, HS)

“Helsinki is an important engine for the whole of Finland’s mental and material development. This is why the urban space is of importance for all Finns.” (Editorial, 1.11.2013, HS)

“What happens in the capital city-region and in Uusimaa region determines pretty much the future of the whole country’s welfare services.” (Editorial, 7.9.2013)

“The Helsinki region has a huge national economic importance and it is of benefit for the whole country that the region succeeds in the international competition as good as possible.” (Member of Parliament, National Coalition party, 24.8.2011, HS)

“If Helsinki is not growing, it is a huge catastrophe for the whole national economy” (Helsinki city officer, 5.1.2015, HS)

While the quotes above illustrate the regional focus of this newspaper and the linking of the public discussions on the topical political agendas, it also demonstrates a broader trend of how the “urban talk” in Finland is strongly geared around the capital city-region. Thereby, the development and success of that region are rescaled to a question of national survival and competitiveness. The quotes also illustrate how the national role of the capital city-region was used to justify differentially scaled political actions and agendas, ranging from local level urban planning issues to national-level administrative reforms.

The third salient characteristic of the city-regionalist discourse was the criticism of the state both as a territorial entity and as a governing apparatus. The criticism of

the state-as-territory concerned the dispersed—and thus costly—spatial structure of the state; whereas, the state apparatus was criticized for subsidizing the peripheral regions and for decentralizing state institutions and activities in ways that support the dispersed structure. While most of the critique was directed toward the State and the “anti-urban national government”—as the then mayor of the city of Helsinki put it during his mayoral campaign (HS, 8.3.2017)—it also echoed growing tensions between the major cities and the other regions. The right-wing local politicians from the capital city-region especially expressed their dissatisfaction with the imbalance between the prosperous capital region and the unproductive peripheries:

“The capital city-region can’t afford to pay nearly half a billion euros in a year for the artificial respiration of the withering regions” (Local politicians, 4.2.2016, HS)

“Helsinki and Uusimaa will for sure continue to finance a great deal of the welfare of the rest of the country in future. There are great risks in the air with regard to whether the purse of the region which provides welfare to Finland is used too much.” (HS 30.12.2015, chairman, city board, Helsinki)

As part of this talk, citizens were made responsible for their places of residence and expected to make rational choices about whether they wanted to live in peripheral locations with high living costs and far away from services, or to enjoy the prosperity of the coming metropolitan region.

Fourth, the city-regionalist discourse was characterized by there-is-no-alternative urban talk. Accordingly, urbanization was considered to be a global phenomenon—an unavoidable megatrend—to which the country simply needed to adapt in order to survive. Yet, at the same time, the urbanization of the country was portrayed as the only way for the nation to survive in the ever-intensifying global competition—and to solve the national problem of public deficit.

10.5 Conclusion

“The decline of the European nation-state system; the economic and geographic shrinkage of the earth, so that prosperity and depression tend to become world-wide phenomena; the transformation of mankind, which until our times was an abstract notion or guiding principle for humanists only, into a really existing entity whose members at the most distant points of the globe need less time to meet than the members of a nation needed a generation ago—these mark the beginnings of the last stage in this development. Just as the family and its property were replaced by class membership and national territory, so mankind now begins to replace nationally bound societies, and the earth replaces the limited state territory. But whatever the future may bring, the process of world alienation, started by expropriation and characterized by an ever-increasing progress in wealth, can only assume even more radical proportions if it is permitted to follow its own inherent law. For men cannot become citizens of the world as they are citizens of their countries, and social men cannot own collectively as family and household men own their private property.” (Arendt 1998, 257).

This long passage is worth quoting because it captures some of the key processes that resurface in the city-regionalist discourse on state spatiality, and at the same

time, incorporates the Arendtian interpretation of their implications for public life and citizenship, thus serving well as our point of departure for the concluding discussion. We conclude with three themes: How the city-regionalist discourse indicates “the loss of the world,” how the public space in the Finnish case is already restricted in a way that challenges the cohesion of the state as territorial political community, and what lacunae can thus be identified in the city-regionalist imaginary, and by extension, in the discussion on urban agendas.

In the quoted passage, Arendt anticipates some of the commonplaces of the current urbanization narrative—the decline of the state on the systemic level, the globalized economy, the acceleration of societal processes—but interprets them in terms of loss and alienation. Our first theme, the loss of the common world in the city-regionalist discourse in Finland manifests itself above all in the thorough economization of the imaginary, which in turns leads to the peculiar form of depoliticized politics. The key aspect of this politics of depoliticization is the role of the economic knowledge in establishing an undisputable truth regime and the reference point for policy choices claiming to represent the “national general interest.” The perceived certainty of economic knowledge produces the there-is-no-alternative tone of the discourse. The problem with the reductive understanding of the economy, especially in terms of the knowledge-based economy, is the consequent framing of economic questions in a way that allows only urban answers. This form of economization drops the rural areas and lesser city-regions depending on material forms of economy out of the picture almost by default. Regarding research on urban geographies, the lack of constitutive outside, and a meaningful role for it, is also the problem with the planetary urbanization thesis (Brenner and Schmid 2015).

The public space is delimited both in its themes and in terms of political subjectivization. The urban bias is manifested in the identification of societal problems or issues of public concern (urban problems requiring special attention, other problems as solvable through urbanization) and the exclusivist logic of urbanization regarding the subjectification of the state-citizen. Based on our selective reading, the city-regionalist discourse effectively delimits the themes, modes, and participants of the public discussion on urbanization in Finland to pro-urban voices wielding predominantly economic arguments and drawing on expert knowledge. In terms of political mobilization, the capital city-region of Helsinki is set against rest of the country, and the regional interests of Helsinki are identified with the national general interest—this is perhaps the hard core of the policy initiatives that seek to metropolitanize the state.

If the public space constituted in the discourse can tell us about the city-regionalist view of the political community, then compared to a state-wide political community, it is less pluralist and also less inclusive of different kinds of human subjects. The citizen-subject of urbanization is predominantly understood as an urban entrepreneur, a particular case of *animal laborans*, whose virtue consists of engaging in productive economic processes (either striving for “international excellence,” or at least for upkeep of one’s life).

Altogether we have sought to demonstrate in this study that the national urban agenda of city-regionalism is articulated through the depoliticizing notions of “gen-

eral interest” and “common good” as a nationally necessary project. However, through the analysis of the city-regionalist discourse, we have demonstrated that city-regionalism is a highly exclusive spatial imaginary which may potentially contribute to the strengthening of the political and social inequalities within the state territory by weathering the idea of the state as a territorial political community and by delimiting the scope of public sphere around particular urban issues and regions. From this perspective, urbanization in terms of this urban agenda emergent in Finland appears as centralizing the ordering of state space that works against the diversity/plurality of regions, places, and subjects, and hence against the understanding of a political community through pluralism. If we share Arendt’s skepticism about meaningful citizenship of the world, the deconstruction of the state-wide political community is likely to spell problems for democratic participation, as well as for the social and territorial cohesion on the national scale.

Based on our reading of the city-regionalist discourse on urbanization in Finland, we suggest that the exclusively economic framing of urbanization is clearly not enough to account for all its relevant aspects and that urbanization must be studied as a political phenomenon. This includes analyzing the political economy of urbanization by focusing on the economic interests of the actors taking part in the discourse and on the impact of urbanization on the geographically uneven development, but also thinking through the implications of city-regionalist policies for the notions of participatory democracy, state territoriality, and social cohesion. The lavish pro-urban claims that urbanization would be an all-encompassing solution to major global problems also merits a thorough critical scrutiny. The economic bias in the city-regionalist discourse strongly suggests that urbanization is mainly expected to produce economic growth and as such, its potential for solving environmental problems is far from unambiguous.

In this chapter, we have sought to open the question on the political production of city-regionalism from a new angle: The Arendtian view on politics, public space, and political community. Our goal has been threefold. First, we have drawn attention to the role of economic knowledge claims in the production of politics of depoliticization. Second, we have emphasized the salience of equality in the production of public space that can allow for active citizenship and democratic politics. Third, we have wanted to encourage critical thought on urbanization in its implications for the notion of human subject and the spatial configuration of the political community. From the perspective of political pluralism, the city-regionalist conception of citizen as an urban entrepreneur and the privileging of metropolitan space both offer an impoverished view on the polity.

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Part IV
Regional and Urban Agendas Between
Policy and Planning

Chapter 11

The Role of Subnational Governments in the Cities of Tomorrow. The Urban Agenda for Andalusia



Rafael Merinero Rodríguez and María Angeles Huete García

Abstract During the last decades, a renewed interest in policies geared specifically towards cities has emerged. UN-HABITAT (2014) defines an urban policy as a series of coherent decisions, derived from a deliberative process of coordination, and which brings various stakeholders together around a shared vision and goals, aimed at promoting long-term urban development that is more transformative, inclusive, and resilient. In accordance with this definition, public administrations at national and international level have sought to respond to this renewed interest in cities, but also, and above all, to this new way of understanding urban reality from the perspective of public policies. This has materialised through specific instruments such as urban agendas, which provide a general framework to lay the foundations and offer general guidelines when undertaking intervention in urban areas. The aim of this chapter is to reflect on the role played in general by regions with regard to city policies and, specifically, within the framework of urban agendas. To this end, first, the chapter analyzes the relevance of proposing urban agendas at regional level. In this sense, the definition and measurement of regional capacity are reviewed from the point of view of policies for cities. The second part focuses on the analyses the case of Andalusia in Spain, the country's first region to develop an Urban Agenda.

Keywords Urban agendas · Subnational governments · Regional level · Spain

11.1 Introduction

The start of the twenty-first century has been characterised by renewed interest in policies geared specifically towards cities, at a national and international level. UN-HABITAT (2014) defines an urban policy as a series of coherent decisions, derived from a deliberative process of coordination, and which brings various stakeholders

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together around a shared vision and goals, aimed at promoting long-term urban development that is more transformative, inclusive, and resilient.

In accordance with this definition, public administrations at different levels of government have sought to respond not only to this renewed interest in cities, but also, and above all, to this new way of understanding urban reality from the perspective of public policies. This has materialised through specific instruments such as urban agendas, which provide a general framework to lay the foundations and offer general guidelines when undertaking intervention in urban areas.

The aim of this chapter is to reflect on the role played in general by regions with regard to city policies and, specifically, within the framework of urban agendas. To this end, it analyses the case of Andalusia in Spain, the country's first region to develop an Urban Agenda.

To do this, a review of the literature on the role of regional governments in urban policies is made. Then, from empirical evidences (a survey for local actors) the position of the regional government of Andalusia regarding urban policies in the region is analysed. Along with the analysis of quantitative data, the chapter carries out an analysis of public policy documents, in a more detailed way, regarding the Urban Agenda of Andalusia. Both from a substantive perspective (its content) and in relation to its procedural dimension (governance networks).

This chapter is structured as follows. The first Section offers a brief reflection on the role played by subnational units of government in the global intergovernmental network. The second Section examines the region as a unit of analysis, taking into consideration some of the key dimensions when ascertaining its importance in the intergovernmental network. The third Section focuses on the role played by regions in city policies and, specifically, in urban agendas. The fourth and fifth Sections analyse the specific case of Spain: firstly, the intergovernmental model, focusing on the regional level of government in particular; and secondly, the specific case of Andalusia as a self-governing region and its Urban Agenda. The last Section sets out our final considerations.

11.2 The Role of Subnational Governments Within the Global Intergovernmental Network

Subnational levels of government encompass decentralised entities, whose governing bodies are elected by means of universal suffrage, with responsibilities and a certain degree of autonomy with regard to budget, human resources, and assets. These levels of government hold significant weighting within the intergovernmental network. Specifically, the number of governmental levels or jurisdictions within which the population currently resides is between three and six, of which between one and four and within the nation state. All of them have one or two levels of local government, and one, two or three levels of intermediate or regional government below the national government (OECD 2016).

A substantial body of evidence points to the current importance of subnational levels of government at a global level. But this presence might grow to an even greater extent in future. As indicated by the OECD world observatory on subnational government finance (2016), through initiatives such as sustainable development goals, the New Urban Agenda, the Paris agreements on climate change, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the international community has set some very ambitious development goals. This ambition is widely shared by local and regional governments, which will play an important role in achieving these goals, because they are responsible for the delivery of basic services, investments, and policies that are essential for development.

In general terms, subnational governments play a key role in the provision of services, especially within the social sphere, since they represent a quarter of total public spending, which accounts for 9% of gross domestic product. The majority of this effort is focused on education, general public services, social protection, healthcare, and economic development. Taking as a reference the evidence collated in this document, the following table summarises the distribution of competences between the different levels of subnational government within the OECD context (Table 11.1).

In addition, subnational governments are the largest public employers. The majority of employment generated in the public sector is created at the local and regional level, accounting for 35% of spending (OECD 2016). However, their revenues are mainly from subsidies, to a much greater extent than the taxes managed directly by them. In general, as indicated in the OECD report on cities and regions (2018), these units of government account for 26% of the gross domestic product of countries.

In short, subnational stakeholders are significant players within the intergovernmental network, in terms of their presence in the implementation of public policies

Table 11.1 Distribution of responsibilities between different levels of government

Municipal level	Regional level
Education (nurseries and primary education)	Secondary education, higher education, and vocational training
Planning and urban management	Territorial planning
Basic services (water, electricity, and street cleaning)	Regional economic development and innovation
Road network and public transport	Healthcare (specialist care and hospitals)
Social issues (care for families, minors, the elderly, people with disabilities, alleviation of poverty, etc.)	Social issues: employment, training, inclusion, etc.
Primary and preventive healthcare	Regional roads and public transport
Leisure (sport) and culture	Culture, heritage, and tourism
Public order and security	Environmental protection
Economic development, tourism, and commerce	Social housing
Environment	Public order and security (regional police and civil protection)
Social housing	Supervision of local government (in federal states)
Administration and services	

Source Subnational governments around the world. Structure and finance (2016)

and with regard to the management of resources within public administrations as a whole. In this respect, the role played by regions has proven to be a key aspect, given their weight compared to the other subnational governments. They will be examined in more detail in the following Section.

11.3 The Region as a Unit of Analysis. Models for Measuring Regional Authority

Marks et al. (2008) came up with a definition of the regional scale that seeks to guarantee an optimum level of abstraction to enable the comparison of different cases on an international scale. To do this, they define the regional level of government as follows:

1. A given territory that has a single continuous border.
2. It is in an intermediate situation between the local and national spheres.
3. It is the sum total of all the legislative and executive institutions responsible for decision-making.

Taking this definition into consideration to recognise the regional scale and in relation to the exercise of power held by said level of government, these authors claim that a regional government has, with regard to a territorial jurisdiction (A), a certain degree of authority (B) over certain actions (C). On the basis of these dimensions (territorial scope, normative development, and the development of public policies), these authors created a scheme to make regional authority an operational concept, which would be summarised in two elements that are fundamental for the purposes of this chapter: fiscal capacity and political capacity.

In this regard, it is of particular interest in this chapter to analyse the role played by regional government within the intergovernmental network with regard to political capacity, focusing specifically on two fundamental elements: the capacity for normative development in relation to urban areas,¹ and the capacity to develop public policies in urban areas.²

11.4 The Role of Regions in Policies Aimed at Cities

The knowledge generated in the literature about the role of lower levels of government within the intergovernmental network is fairly prolific. Firstly, ‘decentralisation theory’ (Oates 1972) argues that these lower levels of government (municipalities) are

¹*Law making*, in the operationalisation developed by Hooghe et al. (2010), defined as the extent to which regional representatives co-determine national legislation.

²*Policy scope*, in the operationalisation developed by Hooghe et al. (2010), defined as the range of policies for which a regional government is responsible.

better able to adjust the provision of public assets to local demands and preferences compared to a uniform provision offered by central government.

Tiebout (1956) and Musgrave (1959), on the other hand, argue that decentralisation achieves a more efficient distribution of public resources, since local governments have better knowledge of actual local preferences and can develop urban policies that are more in keeping with their citizens.

In short, one question appears to be central in relation with the role played by subnational levels of government (regions and local entities): their capacity to regionalise or localise policies, a key question when dealing with policies geared towards specific territories such as cities.

Along these lines, Atkinson (2014) states that for European urban policies, policy orientations need to be developed in relation to their regional/subnational context and based on their existing assets. In each case, the place-based approach must be utilised in a way that respects the regional and local context, actively involves a wide range of local stakeholders and draws upon local knowledge to develop a strategic and coherent long-term approach (Zauch et al. 2013). The author also notes that, despite the potential represented by the increasing emphasis on the urban dimension of Cohesion Policy, its success will depend on the modalities of developing and implementing policies by national and regional administrations (Atkinson 2015). Atkinson's reflection has materialised through various operational programmes (ERDF³ and ESF) in which the presence of regions as an explicitly urban component of funding has become a reality.

Along this same line, the role assigned to the different levels of government by the documents drawn up within the context of the New Urban Agenda is particularly important. Hence, the Action framework for implementation of the NUA (AFINUA) (2017) provides a fairly clear definition of the distribution of political work between the stakeholders of the intergovernmental network for the implementation of the Urban Agenda.

As shown in Table 11.2, this document distributes functions between the stakeholders involved in the city, assigning key importance to those situated within the local sphere (local authorities and civil society), especially during the implementation stage. Furthermore, the role played by regions is also important, specifically with regard to shaping urban policies at a national level, as well as planning and the urban economy (Table 11.3).

Although this is the vision of the role assigned to the regions on a global scale, it is interesting to reflect on the way in which these proposals materialise within a specific case, such as Spain, examined in depth in the next Section.

³European Regional Development Fund and Social European Fund.

Table 11.2 The concept of regional authority. Core analytical elements

	Defining elements	Analytical elements		
Regional government	Territorial scope Normative development Implementation of public policies	Fiscal capacity		
		Political capacity	Law making	The extent to which regional representatives co-determine national legislation
			Policy scope	The range of policies for which a regional government is responsible

Source Authors' own based on Hooghe et al. (2010)

Table 11.3 Weight of the intergovernmental stakeholders in the NUA

	Central	Regional	Local	Civil society
National Urban Policies	6/6	6/6	5/6	3/6
Urban legislation	9/9	2/9	8/9	3/9
Urban planning and design	2/8	5/8	8/8	6/8
Urban economy	4/6	4/6	5/6	5/6
Local implementation	1/6	1/6	6/6	6/6
Mean	61.64	53.53	91.08	68.32

Source Based on AFINUA (2017)

Note the indicator of weighting is based on the following ratio: Actions in which the stakeholder concerned has a presence/total actions

11.5 The Spanish Case: The Weight of Regions in Institutional Design

Spain has two tiers of regional government: fifty provinces and seventeen self-governing regions, which is the regional level of government. This governance structure is materialised through a series of political competences and the capacity to determine regulation at a national level, as described briefly below.

In relation to the competencies held, the 1978 Constitution guarantees self-government for all nationalities and regions and lists twenty-two competences that could be transferred to self-governing regions. These include city and regional planning, health and hygiene, housing, public works, regional railways and roads, ports and airports, agriculture, forests and fishing, environmental protection, culture, tourism, promotion of sports, social welfare, economic development within the objectives set by national economic policy, and regional political institutions (Hooghe et al. 2010).

Self-governing regions can assume residual powers if so stated in their statute of autonomy. Central government has exclusive jurisdiction over foreign policy, defence, justice, labour, civil and commercial law, social security, public safety, customs and trade, and currency, as well as citizenship and immigration. Central government may also enact framework legislation and transfer or delegate competences to the self-governing regions, and it may adopt harmonisation laws even when jurisdiction lies with the self-governing regions themselves (Hooghe et al. 2010).

With regard to the capacity to determine state legislation, the Spanish legislative body is a two-chamber system: congress and the senate. The latter is a body of territorial representation. The 1978 Constitution introduced representation for the self-governing regions. Since then, the provinces have 208 members and self-governing regions have 58 members in the 266-seat chamber.

In relation with aspects pertaining to cities, Spanish regions have considerable authority in the development of legislative and funding frameworks for urban aspects such as regeneration. However, few have developed them. The case of Catalonia is an exception with the so-called *Ley de Barrios* (Neighbourhoods Law) in 2004. In 2009, a similar law was passed in the Balearic Islands, and the IZARTU programme for urban regeneration, launched in the Basque Country through calls in 2001, 2004, and 2009 (De Gregorio Hurtado 2012, 2017).

The existence of this legislative capacity for matters related with cities, and which has not been developed by the regions, makes the specific case of Andalusia and the development of an Urban Agenda on a regional scale even more interesting. The next Sections will deal specifically with this.

11.6 The Self-governing Region of Andalusia. Its Role in City Policy

The Self-Governing Region of Andalusia, the subject of this chapter, is one of the regions of Spain that enjoy the greatest political capacity and influence on regulation.

The 1978 Constitution laid out two routes to regional autonomy: the *vía rápida* and the *vía lenta*. The fast track was only meant to be used by the three historic nationalities that passed statutes of autonomy during the Second Republic—the Basque Country, Catalonia, and Galicia—though Andalusia used this route as well. The first two had their statutes approved by Spanish congress in 1979, while those of Andalusia and Galicia were passed in 1981. The remaining self-governing regions negotiated a limited transfer of powers with central government, which could be extended later.

Hence, the Self-Governing Region of Andalusia is the ideal space to reflect on the role played by regions in the intergovernmental network, and specifically within the development of urban policies. Firstly, because it is one of the regions that boast the highest capacity with regard to decision-making, in terms of its competences and because of its weight within regulation.⁴ Secondly, because it is the first Self-

⁴Of the total 266 seats in the Senate, 34 correspond to Andalusia, representing 12.78%.

Governing Region of Spain to have approved its Urban Agenda for the region. It should also be taken into consideration that, given the lack of an explicit urban policy at a national level, many of the actions taken on a national scale are subsidised by European funding. Currently, Andalusia is the region that receives the largest volume of European funds earmarked for cities, specifically 55%.

In addition to the objective evidence set out above, the perceptions held by stakeholders in the region regarding the presence of regional government in urban policies is truly significant. Below, we present the results of a consultation carried out with local stakeholders in the region within the framework of drawing up the Urban Agenda for Andalusia, which highlight the key role played by regional government with regard to cities. It shows that, both in terms of formal recognition (current situation) and the desires of the stakeholders (ideal situation), the region plays a key role.

This consultation was carried out with a view to ascertaining the role played by the region in aspects related with three dimensions. Firstly, in the regulation of policies for cities (law making). Secondly, in the different public policies for cities (political scope), and finally, a procedural dimension (governance), associated with coherence with policies, both internal (in relation to mid and long-term objectives) and external, through its work to generate mechanisms of collaboration between the different influential stakeholders in the city.

In general terms, local stakeholders bestow greater diversity on the ideal network with regard to the current existing network in all the aspects they were asked about. Specifically, the plurality of the network is increased, assigning greater presence to local stakeholders, both from the public sphere (Provincial and Town/City Council) and from civil society.

Regarding the role played by regions in policies for cities, this is the only level of government that is present in all matters consulted, both with regard to their perception about the current network and in relation to the ideal network, as shown in the following graph.

11.7 The Urban Agenda for Andalusia

In January 2018, the Governing Council of the Self-Governing Region of Andalusia began drawing up the Urban Agenda for the region,⁵ culminating with the agreement reached on 18th September 2018 by the Governing Council, which approved the Urban Agenda for Andalusia.⁶

This Agenda is defined as a strategic framework promoted by the Regional Department for the Environment and Regional Planning in Andalusia with a view of becoming an instrument for social and economic development in the region, by fostering

⁵Agreement reached on 30th January 2018 by the Governing Council, which approved the formulation of the Urban Agenda for Andalusia (BOJA, 7th February 2018).

⁶BOJA, 24th September 2018.

the role of cities and urban processes through the creation of elements of reference for the design and implementation of public policies, aimed at Andalusia's cities and established by them, within the time horizon of 2030.

The Agenda is the first instrument of its kind promoted by a regional level of government in Spain. Catalonia and the Basque Country then followed suit and are currently in the process of defining their respective agendas.

The Urban Agenda for Andalusia represented another step in the process initiated in 2015 with the approval by UN-Habitat of the New Urban Agenda, as a general road map for the development of cities over the coming years.⁷ Similarly, although from a more operational perspective, the European Union, through the Pact of Amsterdam (2016), approved the creation of an Urban Agenda for the European Union. From that moment onwards, the member states began to develop their own Urban Agenda. At the time, the Urban Agenda for Andalusia was being drawn up, Spain was immersed in the same process, publishing in March 2018 an initial working document that laid the foundations for the Spanish Urban Agenda.

Table 11.4 presents a comparative summary of the main political antecedents for Andalusia's Urban Agenda, which have undoubtedly shaped its subsequent development (Table 11.5).

11.7.1 Key Elements in the Urban Agenda for Andalusia

The Urban Agenda for Andalusia was designed to be a strategic instrument for the region's social and economic development. Based on the model of integrated development, it would allow a framework to be created for the sector specific policies promoted by Andalusia's Regional Government, facilitating a city-scale territorialised approach to regional policies, and a useful tool to apply to public policies undertaken by local governments in Andalusia. It was based on three fundamental elements, which determined its configuration as development strategies:

1. Taking as a fundamental thematic reference the key dimensions established in the New Urban Agenda of the UN, the European Urban Agenda and the Urban Agenda for Spain, so that reflection and structuring guidelines align with the different levels of government.
2. Using methods and participatory techniques capable of incorporating the contributions of eminent public and private stakeholders from the social and economic reality of Andalusia.
3. Considering it as a territorialised instrument so that responses to the challenges of urban development are adapted to the characteristics of the different types of cities present in the region.

⁷This document is developed in subsequent implementation plans, such as the ones drawn up for Latin America and the Caribbean, in February of 2018 (UN-Habitat 2018).

Table 11.4 The role played by the region in cities from the perspective of local stakeholders

Dimension	Action in the city	Current situation		Ideal situation	
		Network of stakeholders	%	Network of stakeholders	%
Law making	Create a normative and institutional framework that regulates urban policies at a national level	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government	12.62	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	17.47
Policy scope	Protect the city's cultural and natural heritage	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	28.15	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	40.77
	Guarantee access to services and infrastructures (basic services, housing, transport, etc.) for all collectives	Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	17.47	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	17.47
	Guarantee the safety and security of the city, especially of the most vulnerable collectives (age, gender, origin, etc.)	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	11.65	Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	18.44
	Promote the social inclusion of vulnerable neighbourhoods and collectives	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	17.47	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	26.21
	Promote collaboration agreements with the private sector to achieve economic development	Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	13.59	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	24.27

(continued)

Table 11.4 (continued)

Dimension	Action in the city	Current situation		Ideal situation	
		Network of stakeholders	%	Network of stakeholders	%
	Connect territories and economies through the promotion of new information and communication technologies, development of infrastructures, and improvement of mobility	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	20.38	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	27.18
	Create employment through community organisations, cooperatives, and small businesses	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	17.47	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	29.12
	Promote economies of scale and reduce service production costs	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	11.65	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	19.41
	Promote complementarity between rural and urban areas	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	14.56	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	18.44

(continued)

Table 11.4 (continued)

Dimension	Action in the city	Current situation		Ideal situation	
		Network of stakeholders	%	Network of stakeholders	%
Governance	Promote a dense city, in which services are close and well connected, avoiding unchecked growth and expansion	Regional Government, Town/City Council	11.65	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	16.5
	Promote sustainable sources of energy, housing and transport	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	22.33	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	25.24
	Manage the impacts of climate change	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	26.21	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	33.98
	Facilitate cooperation between the different levels of government	Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	13.59	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	20.38
	Give coherence to urban policies at a local level with the regional, national, and international levels	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	15.53	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	20.38

(continued)

Table 11.4 (continued)

Dimension	Action in the city	Current situation		Ideal situation	
		Network of stakeholders	%	Network of stakeholders	%
	Establish mechanisms to evaluate and monitor urban policies	Regional Government	9.7	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	13.59
	Involve different local stakeholders in urban policies	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	12.62	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	18.44
	Guarantee the continuity of long-term goals, even in times of political change	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council	11.65	European Union, Central Government, Regional Government, Provincial Council, Town/City Council, Civil Society	18.44

Source Authors' own based on Urban Agenda for Andalusia (2018)

Table 11.5 Political antecedents on a multi-level scale

	New Urban Agenda (UN-Habitat)	EU Urban Agenda	Spanish Urban Agenda
Objectives	Regulation and planning. Funding and promotion of local administration Knowledge sharing Governance and participation	Regulation and planning Knowledge sharing between member states Multi-level cooperation	Regulation and Planning Knowledge sharing Multi-level governance Participation and transparency
Implementing structure	National, subnational, and local policies	Partnerships or thematic associations to work on specific subjects	Multidisciplinary group of experts. Working groups with different stakeholders involved in intervention in urban areas
Stakeholders involved in creation	Member states and other public stakeholders	Member states and other public and private stakeholders	Ministries and government departments involved, self-governing regions, FEMP, professional and private sector, and the tertiary sector

Source Authors' own based on the presentation 'Medium-sized cities facing the challenges of the New Urban Agenda' (2018). Almansa Impulsa and the Ministry of Development

11.7.2 Objectives

In order to promote an Urban Agenda for the region of Andalusia that is coherent with the approaches established in the national and international agendas, the goals set are grounded in the achievement of three major objectives: better knowledge of the urban reality, better regulation of policies aimed at cities, and better funding or management of resources, with which said policies are implemented. Specifically: *Better knowledge*: the Urban Agenda for Andalusia begins with the generation of sufficient and reliable information on the basis of which to propose future actions in urban areas. In addition, the Agenda may constitute a space for information and knowledge sharing about the urban reality between the key stakeholders that operate in these territories; *Better regulation*: understood in the case of Andalusia as the need to promote a general framework for the design and implementation of urban policies, taking into consideration the reality and specificities of the territories at which they are aimed, and which could guide other administrations; and *Better funding*: for the Urban Agenda of Andalusia, this is approached through the need to promote more

effective and efficient management of resources that are mobilised within the region as a whole and which are aimed specifically or indirectly at urban areas.

In coherence with these three major principles, the Urban Agenda for Andalusia pursues the following objectives:

- Promote rigorous systematic knowledge of Andalusia's urban reality, creating greater capacity to respond to the challenges faced by cities in future.
- Incorporate Andalusia in the process of strategic reflection and debate that has been generated nationally and internationally about cities, in alignment with the Urban Agendas defined at different international levels (United Nations and the European Union), and the Urban Agenda for Spain.
- Create a framework for reflection and knowledge sharing about urban policies for Andalusia, seeking to promote a greater degree of external coherence between the policies implemented in Andalusia's urban areas.
- Harness the potential of and contribution offered by urban areas to achieve the objectives of the region and related priorities, fully respecting its principles and competencies.
- Establish an integrated and coordinated approach to public policies with a possible impact on urban areas.
- Facilitate a space for reflection and creation of proposals aimed at the relationship between urban areas and their rural areas.
- Incorporate regional stakeholders in the design of policies aimed at cities.
- Encourage the urban authorities to work systematically and coherently, seeking to achieve the greatest possible coherence between the Urban Agenda for the region and the priorities of cities, and establishing a framework of reference for local agendas.
- Establish a clear link between the Urban Agenda for Andalusia and the reality and characteristics of the urban and territorial system that characterise the region.

11.7.3 Content of the Agenda

When drawing up the Urban Agenda for Andalusia, the Reference Framework of Sustainable Cities was taken as the basis, a document assumed by the EU in 2008—and revalidated in 2010 and 2011—with a view to unifying the current main objectives to accomplish a common goal: the achievement of sustainable cities.

The other documents considered were as follows:

- Urban Agenda for the EU (UA), which emanated from the 2016 Pact of Amsterdam, in which a series of priority issues are set out, to be taken into consideration when drawing up plans and urban agendas in the European Union.
- The United Nations New Urban Agenda (NUA), drawn up following the United Nations 2016 Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito.

Given that, when the Urban Agenda for Andalusia was being drafted, there was not yet an approved Spanish Urban Agenda, the decision was made to include documents referring to the country scale, specifically:

- The Spanish Urban and Local Sustainability Strategy (EESUL), proposed by the Ministries of the Environment, Rural and Maritime Affairs, and Development, in 2011, which also features an array of directives and measures divided up into different spheres.
- Guidelines for the definition of Integrated Sustainable Urban Development Strategies (EDUSI) for the period 2014–2020, which systematically mention useful diagnostics indications when drawing up the present document.

The Urban Agenda for Andalusia was structured into five dimensions, reflected in the different documents mentioned above, but adapted to the urban reality of the region: spatial, economic, social, environmental, and governance. The content production system revolved around the following elements:

- Facts: these are elements that pose challenges, problems or needs pertaining to the reality of cities.
- Challenges: these are the key elements on the basis of which the urban reality of Andalusia should be changed by 2030.
- Strategic lines: these are the translation of the challenges identified into strategies, grounded and based on knowledge of the territory.
- Lines of action: these are the elements through which strategic lines are made specific.
- Key elements: these are issues around which the individualised actions for each local or provincial agenda shall be articulated by means of urban systems. These aspects must be taken into account when tackling each of the lines of action proposed for the application of the Agenda. In order to systematise the information related with each line of action, these have been developed following a system of specifications sheets that set out the elements detailed above, in addition to the following Sections:
 - Integrated approach, detailing the other strategic lines, and lines of action with which each one is associated.
 - Knowledge generation for decision-making, which compiles aspects that must be taken into account for the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of each line of action.
 - Territorialisation, which reflects an approximation of the individualised application of each of the strategic lines set out in the Agenda for each of the territorial systems of settlements of the Reference Urban System.

In short, the content structure of the Urban Agenda for Andalusia was aimed at achieving the principles of integrality, knowledge generation, and territorialisation, which are so important in the context of the model of urban development that must guide the development of the Agenda.

The aim was for these principles to materialise as specifically as possible, which is why they were suggested as the minimum unit of disaggregation in the content of the agenda, as the key elements. These principles make reference to the internal organisation of the contents of the agenda and its supporting model of development. However, with this type of approach, and specifically through the thematic areas contemplated, the Urban Agenda also sought to align with existing Urban Agenda at higher levels of government.

11.7.4 Process of Definition

The Urban Agenda for Andalusia was promoted by the General Directorate for Urban Planning, part of Andalusia's Regional Department for the Environment and Territorial Planning. Although initially it was approached through one specific area of the region's government, the aim right from the outset was that this instrument would constitute a framework for policies with regard to cities throughout the entire region. This motivation materialised in two elements. Firstly, through the fact that it was promoted and approved by Andalusia's Governing Council. Secondly, because the system of governance designed to draft this Agenda sought to incorporate all the regional departments involved in the region's urban areas, through the creation of an Interdepartmental Committee.

In addition, the process for drawing up the Urban Agenda for Andalusia was grounded in a plural governance network, seeking to incorporate the visions of public and private stakeholders involved in cities throughout the various different stages of its compilation.

Figure 11.1 shows the interaction process in the different stages of drawing up the Urban Agenda and the governance network generated for each of the steps undertaken (Fig. 11.2).

The process of drawing up the agenda began with a diagnosis, based on existing indicators in the region in each of the dimensions into which the agenda was subsequently structured: territory, economy, society, environment, and governance.

Below is the analytical tool used to structure the information generated through the process of diagnosis (Table 11.6).

The definition of a Regional Urban Agenda is opportune. Not only because it is a necessary instrument to generate and coordinate urban policies within the Self-Governing Region, but also because of the breadth and complexity of its urban system. Indeed, Andalusia has traditionally been defined as a 'country of cities' (2008).

Given this perspective, one prior task that had to be undertaken with regard to the Agenda was to define an urban and territorial reference system capable of satisfactorily tackling the breadth and complexity of Andalusia's urban reality. To this end, an Urban Reference System (URS) was generated, tailored to the instrumental purpose for which it was defined. Hence, the region of Andalusia as a whole was organised into five categories of urban systems: Metropolitan areas; System of medium-sized

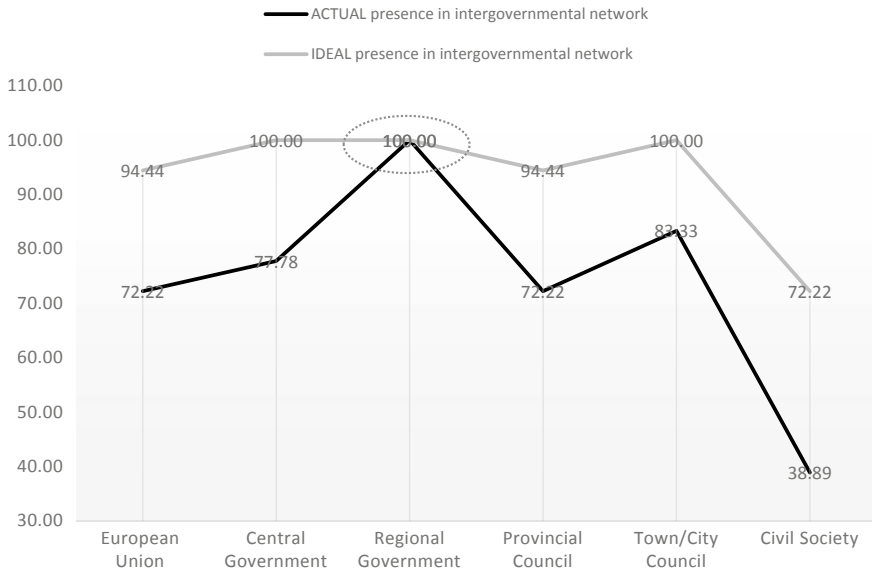


Fig. 11.1 Intergovernmental network in city policies. *Source* Authors’ own based on Urban Agenda for Andalusia (2018)

interior cities; System of medium-sized coastal cities; System of rural settlements with an urban centre; and System of rural settlements with no urban centre. The information generated by the diagnosis was then structured, taking into consideration the urban models generated by the URS. The figure below shows the delimitation of the urban models within the territory of Andalusia (Fig. 11.3).

The criteria used to define and delimit the URS are based on the establishment of a dimensional criterion, minimum size, for the elements of the system, and whether they are individual (municipalities) or categories. This threshold is 20,000 inhabitants, a figure that is regularly used for statistical purposes and in the development of urban policies (recently, for example, in the Sustainable and Integrated Urban Development Strategies or EDUSI). Table 11.7 provides a basic descriptive analysis of the urban models defined for the diagnosis, which includes the number of spheres, municipalities, and inhabitants encompassed by each category.

The diagnosis revealed a first group of elements on which the Agenda was based: *facts*. This document was presented for consideration as part of the first participatory process involving experts in the different thematic dimensions of the Agenda. In parallel to this, an interdepartmental committee was set up, involving all the units and departments from within the regional administration with links to issues concerning the region’s cities.

Based on the consensus generated by the group of experts and the different administrative units, the next step was to consult with key stakeholders in the region, with

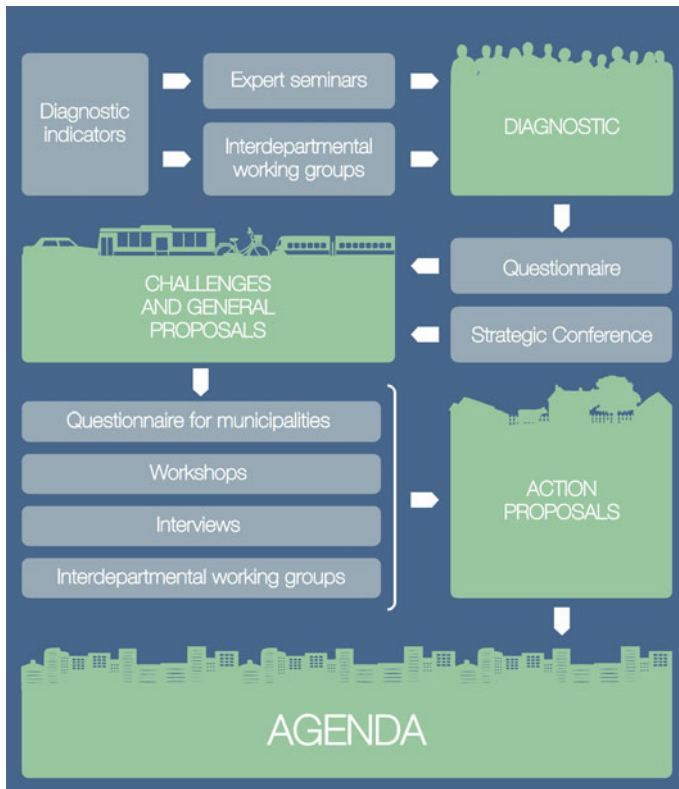


Fig. 11.2 Process for drawing up the Urban Agenda for Andalusia. *Source* Authors' own based on Urban Agenda for Andalusia (2018)

a view to proposing specific proposals in order to respond to the facts flagged up in the previous stage.

For this purpose, various mechanisms were used: a questionnaire completed by local authorities from throughout the region; in-depth interviews with the mayors of the province capitals; and a questionnaire designed to ascertain the views of citizens. During this stage, a strategic conference was held, attended by representatives of public and private entities, as well as individual citizens; Five working groups were set up with key stakeholders from each of the thematic dimensions included in the agenda.

This process was the tool that allowed the necessary knowledge to be generated to validate the facts flagged up by the diagnosis, which would then be materialised in the form of challenges, strategic lines, and lines of action, thus shaping the main body of the Urban Agenda for Andalusia.

Lessons have been learned from the process of launching and drawing up the Urban Agenda for Andalusia, especially in relation to the content and the structure

Table 11.6 Analytical model for the reference urban system of Andalusia. Operationalisation

RFSC dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Proposed indicators
Spatial dimension	Sustainable urban planning	Population density
		Degree of urban occupation
		Green areas per inhabitant
		Proportion of green areas
		Percentage of second homes
		Percentage of empty housing
		Bins for the selective collection of waste per 1000 inhabitants
		Bins for the non-selective collection of waste per 1000 inhabitants
		Proportion of bins for the selective collection of waste with regard to the total
		No. of passenger cars per 100 inhabitants
Evolution in the number of passenger cars per 100 inhabitants in ten years		
Public transport permits per 100 inhabitants		
Evolution in the number of passenger public transport permits		
Public hospitals (average minutes at a municipal level)		
No. of primary healthcare centres per 10,000 inhabitants		
University institutions (average minutes at a municipal level)		
Specific special education schools (average minutes at a municipal level)		
School guidance counselling team (average minutes at a municipal level)		
School residence (average minutes at a municipal level)		
Music/dance school (average minutes at a municipal level)		
No. of infants schools per 10,000 inhabitants		
No. of primary/infants + primary + rural schools per 10,000 inhabitants		
No. of secondary schools per 10,000 inhabitants		
Spatial equity		

(continued)

Table 11.6 (continued)

RFSC dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Proposed indicators
Economic dimensions	Quality of public equipment and spaces	Total number of assets registered in the General Catalogue of Historic Heritage per 1000 inhabitants Evolution in street lighting (street lamps) in five years Proportion of roads in good condition compared to total road network Proportion of roads in need of repair compared to total road network
	Green growth and circular economy	Type of facility for the management of municipal waste (MSW)
Environmental dimension	Connectivity	Telephone lines installed by the phone company Telefónica per inhabitant ADSL lines installed by the phone company Telefónica per inhabitant
	Employment and resilient economy	Average number of registrations with Social Security per year per 100 inhabitants Proportion of indefinite contracts compared to the total number of contracts
	Emissions	Evolution in the carbon footprint over ten years Evolution in the number of diesel oil vehicles over ten years. Air quality
	Municipality's natural resources	Proportion of the land area covered by the municipality occupied by natural protected spaces Evolution in the average daily consumption of water (m ³) Wastewater treatment
Social dimension	Waste management	Kilos of waste managed by the municipality per inhabitant
	Economic vulnerability	Evolution in the number of non-contributory Social Security pensions over five years Evolution in the ratio of temporary contracts over ten years Recorded unemployment rate Average Net Declared Income
	Socio-demographic composition	Migration balance Proportion of foreign population Population ageing index

(continued)

Table 11.6 (continued)

RFSC dimensions	Sub-dimensions	Proposed indicators
Governance	Access to resources	Housing in buildings that are in a poor, deficient or terrible state of repair Illiteracy rate Proportion of the population with a higher education ADSL lines installed by the phone company Telefonica per inhabitant
	Division of political labour for intervention in the city	Economic development
		Social inclusion
		Environment and territory
	Relational	Collaboration with stakeholders from local civil society
		Collaboration between areas/delegations of the Town/City Council
	Management	Collaboration with other levels of government
		City's strategic plan
		Tools to diagnose urban problems
		Definition of objectives
	Definition of areas of intervention	
	Identification of key stakeholders	
	Existence of an action plan	
	Definition of resources	
	Establishment of indicators	

Source: Authors' own based on Urban Agenda for Andalusia (2018)

^a Although this dimension is defined and operationalised, the information required for its analysis will be obtained from primary sources of information (surveys of local leaders and citizens), and the administration process has not yet begun

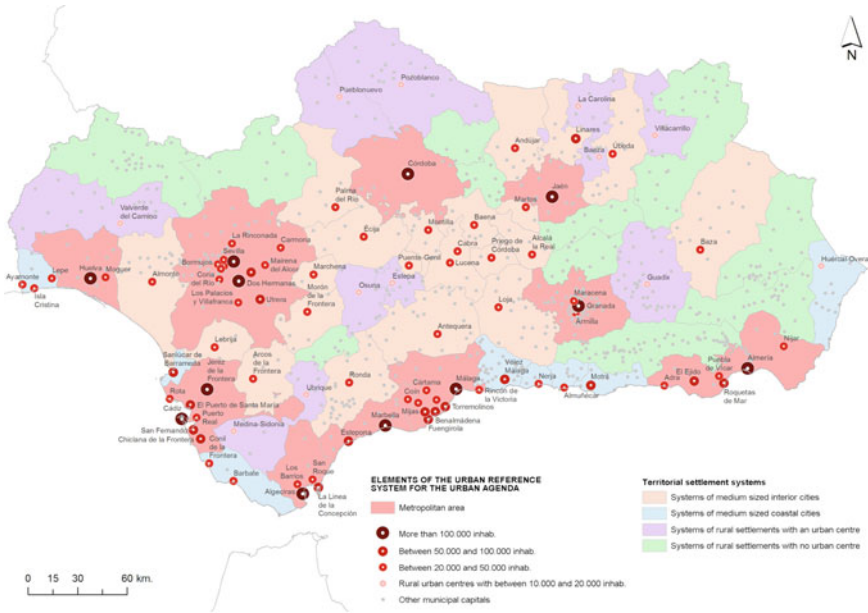


Fig. 3 Elements of the Urban Reference System for Andalusia’s Urban Agenda. *Source* Authors’ own based on Urban Agenda for Andalusia (2018)

Table 11.7 Basic data for the Urban Reference System

Type of territorial system	Spheres	Municipalities	Population 2017
Metropolitan areas	10	195	5,762,091
Systems of medium-sized interior cities	21	186	1,261,153
Systems of medium-sized coastal cities	8	67	607,631
Systems of rural settlements with an urban centre	11	127	396,863
Systems of rural settlements with no urban centre	11	203	352,082
Total	61	778	8,379,820

Source Authors’ own based on Urban Agenda for Andalusia (2018)

of governance, which we believe could offer a useful contribution for future. This next Section deals with them.

11.8 Fundamental Dimensions for the Formulation of an Urban Agenda on a Regional Scale

Taking into consideration the aspects signalled previously in relation with the role played by regions in the intergovernmental network, this next Section sets out a series of aspects deemed to be fundamental when drawing up an Urban Agenda on a regional scale. Specifically, the proposals put forward are grounded in elements pertaining not only to the content of the agendas, but also to the structure of governance generated for their definition and implementation.

Regarding the content of the Agenda, the proposals are set out in relation to the agenda's underlying model of urban development; its coherence or alignment with other agents on a multi-level scale; as well as other key elements in the definition of the contents of the agenda, such as its reference to the territory, the knowledge generated and on which it is based, and, finally, its time frame.

With regard to governance, issues are raised in terms of the nature of the Agenda. Firstly, as an instrument for public policies and in relation to the purported role of said document in regional administration and policies as a whole. In addition, we reflect on and make proposals regarding its position and articulation within the administrative and public policy network of the regional territory as a whole. Finally, we put forward elements and proposals in relation to the identification of stakeholders with whom partnerships could be formed.

Table 11.8 offers a brief description of each of the elements, as well as the specific proposals about how to tackle each of them within the context of an Urban Agenda on a regional scale.

11.9 Conclusions

This chapter has reflected on the role played by subnational levels of government, specifically regional governments, in the intergovernmental network. To this end, we have sought to show the weight of the regions in aspects such as the competencies they hold or their capacity to manage resources. Based on the evidence provided, it could be said that regional levels of government do indeed constitute a sphere within the intergovernmental network that needs to be taken into consideration. This is no real revelation, since the literature has been highlighting this for years now.

This chapter has sought to investigate more specific aspects, such as the suitability of regional government to play a key role in policies aimed at cities, and more specifically, in drawing up and implementing specific instruments such as urban

Table 11.8 Dimensions and recommendations when drawing up a regional Urban Agenda

Dimension	Key element	Description	Specific recommendation
Content of the agenda	Model of Urban Development	One of the effects of this Urban Agenda, inspired by this new model of development, is that the development of cities is approached from an integrated perspective, which implies multi-thematic interrelation to resolve the challenges and problems of cities, overcoming, therefore, the approach based on urban planning. And secondly, in this new model of urban development, new instruments and methods must be launched that go beyond the instruments of Territorial Planning and which, therefore, complement it	Define the basic elements of the Sustainable and Integrated Model of Urban Development

(continued)

Table 11.8 (continued)

Dimension	Key element	Description	Specific recommendation
	Alignment with larger scale agendas	An Urban Agenda on a regional scale must take into account and establish mechanisms of linking up with the existing Agendas at other levels of government. These linkage systems can vary and range from thematic linkage to the incorporation of initiatives and action programmes from the regional Urban Agenda	Facilitate linkage between the Regional Urban Agenda and Urban Agendas at larger territorial scales
	Initial thematic elements	An Urban Agenda must reflect the key issues in the urban areas of the region. To this end, there must be an initial thematic position that can use different establishment formulas: consultations, barometers, expert reports, diagnoses conducted ad hoc or already in existence, or thematic elements from other similar documents or strategies. These are the thematic components around which the necessary debates should be generated within the territory to shape the issues in terms of knowledge generated in relation to which action must be taken	Determine the thematic elements on the basis of which to produce the contents required for the Urban Agenda

(continued)

Table 11.8 (continued)

Dimension	Key element	Description	Specific recommendation
	Reference territory	<p>A regional Urban Agenda represents a great opportunity to link responses to urban development generated at a global or general level with local strategies and initiatives, given that the regional administration has sufficient proximity in terms of administration, territory, and competencies to become a key instrument that promotes sustainable and integrated urban development on a local scale</p> <p>Therefore, the regional government is the most adequate scale to promote a 'hinge' Urban Agenda that offers the great advantage of connecting global urban development processes with the local context, creating an advantageous framework or context so that cities and municipalities have the resources and capacities they need to define their agenda on a local scale</p>	<p>Enable the inclusion of the region's territorial complexity in the Urban Agenda</p>

(continued)

Table 11.8 (continued)

Dimension	Key element	Description	Specific recommendation
	Starting knowledge and data	<p>Any Urban Agenda requires a system of information and knowledge for action. And the regional scale once again becomes an appropriate sphere to obtain the necessary aggregate information and knowledge about a certain territory with a certain numerical scale that is positioned overall within the proposals for change involved in new urban development. Therefore, if any Urban Agenda requires a system of information and knowledge for action, Urban Agendas on a regional scale particularly need this as a top priority, because they are the most adequate territorial spheres in which to evaluate the response capacity of a set of municipalities and territories to the challenges of urban development raised in the Urban Agendas</p>	<p>Specify the information system required in order to define a system of indicators</p>
	Time scale	<p>The process of drawing up the Urban Agenda has a clear time scale, which depends directly on the make-up of the government that is promoting it. Therefore, the political dimension of the time required to draw up strategic instruments becomes one of the fundamental elements to take into account in the process and the method used when drawing up an Urban Agenda. This aspect becomes particularly important in a regional Urban Agenda, since it is an intermediate level of government that is situated within complex political moments on account of its institutional location, especially with local-level political processes</p>	<p>Provide a timescale in which to develop actions to generate knowledge and information in order to draw up the Urban Agenda</p>

(continued)

Table 11.8 (continued)

Dimension	Key element	Description	Specific recommendation
Governance Structure	Type of instrument	<p>From this perspective, the regional Urban Agenda can have two differentiated purposes:</p> <p>(a) As a guide (a kind of road map) that establishes a set of directives in terms of recommendations that the different authorities or public administrations should follow in order to promote urban development</p> <p>(b) As a tool for the design and implementation of urban policies, and which, therefore, establishes specific principles for action that the different administrations and stakeholders must observe when formulating said urban policies. Understood in this way, the regional Urban Agenda must be seen as more than just a document. It should be shaped as a working process capable of establishing changes and specific solutions in terms of urban public policy in order to respond to a certain model of development</p>	Establish elements that facilitate implementation

(continued)

Table 11.8 (continued)

Dimension	Key element	Description	Specific recommendation
	Institutional position	<p>The aim is to establish who and how to promote the creation of the Urban Agenda within the institutional network of the promoting organisation/administration. From this perspective, it is very important to respond to questions such as:</p> <p>(a) Is the Urban Agenda from the whole government or just from the department promoting it?</p> <p>(b) Does the position of the promoting government or department impact on the type of responsibilities that will be assumed by the rest of the departments, and how will the Urban Agenda influence the rest of the departments</p> <p>The key question in this dimension is whether it will only affect the department that promotes it or the entire government. The position adopted in this dimension will be related with the type of institutional leadership required to articulate the instrument</p>	<p>Strengthen the Urban Agenda as an instrument for the region</p>

(continued)

Table 11.8 (continued)

Dimension	Key element	Description	Specific recommendation
	Institutional articulation	The regional Urban Agenda must be assigned to the initiatives and programmes launched, or which will be launched, within the regional government, so that it is very important to take into account similar previous programmes or ones that might have any kind of impact on the questions raised in it. Therefore, there has to be a link with these previous programmes and basic documents in order to contextualise the Agenda within the initiatives promoted by the institution	Link the Urban Agenda to the actions and programmes of the region
	Identification of key stakeholders	The regional Urban Agenda must have a system of governance that, through the leadership of regional government, makes it possible to actively involve all stakeholders required to play a relevant role in the region's responses to urban development	Enable the effective involvement of public and private stakeholders

Source Authors' own based on Urban Agenda for Andalusia (2018)

agendas. To this end, it has provided different evidence, obtained from primary and secondary sources of information, highlighting the key role played by regions in these tools with regard to other levels of government.

The last Section has focused in even more detail on analysing a specific case: the Self-Governing Region of Andalusia, in Spain. This is a relevant case in point, on account of its capacity to roll out the country's first regional Urban Agenda.

Studying the way in which the Urban Agenda for Andalusia was put together has generated some extremely valuable knowledge, on the basis of which, in the last Section of this chapter, we have put forward a series of recommendations to be considered in future when undertaking the task of drawing up regional urban agendas.

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Chapter 12

The Implementation of the Madrid 2030 Agenda: Policy Alignment in Programmes of Urban Regeneration



Javier Ruiz Sánchez and Álvaro Ardura Urquiaga

Abstract This chapter aims to describe a series of programmes, and other instruments put into practice in the city of Madrid during the 2015–2019 period. The *Strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda*, presented in 2018, is a synthesis of the series of spatial urban policies for Madrid. The most original contribution of this document is the idea of *Alignment of Municipal Public Policies to the SDGs*. This means that many of the current spatial policies initially designed and developed by different departments of the local administration tend to merge in a common strategy, in particular, around a set of actions called areas of opportunity. The planning of these areas, now in the design process, can be considered the most interesting tool in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda's spatial goals. This has established a common framework for these different former policies (programmes or actions) to align in a common direction. Our question is: Which is the principle that guides the alignment of a set of different former sectoral approaches in this common direction? Here the idea of Spatial Justice emerges as the complex synthesis that allows Madrid's urban policies to overcome narrow approaches and the subsequent tendency to simplify urban problems. Instead, this alignment represents a sophisticated approach to the high level of complexity of the Agenda.

Keywords Madrid · 2030 Agenda · Policy alignment · Urban regeneration

12.1 Introduction. Urban Policies in Madrid in the Democracy

Recent Municipal Policies in Madrid must be considered strongly linked to two very different political periods, depending on the party in power. From the first municipal elections in 1979, the first democratic elections after a forty-year dicta-

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torship, until 1989, the municipal government was left-oriented. Mayors Enrique Tierno Galván (until 1986) and Juan Barranco, both members of the PSOE *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (Spanish Socialist Workers' Party), governed with strong support from the Communist Party, especially during the first four-year period. A motion of no-confidence led by two right-wing parties in 1989 began a period of more than twenty-five years of right-wing government with a series of Mayors supported mainly by the PP *Partido Popular* (People's Party).

In the Municipal Elections of 2015, a left-wing coalition inspired by the 15-M Movement, *Ahora Madrid* (Madrid Now), self-defined as a "citizen platform of popular unity", with the support of the Socialist Party, broke the uninterrupted succession of right-wing municipal governments and established Manuela Carmena, a retired judge and head of the platform, as the new Mayor of Madrid.

In order to understand current urban policy processes, it would be necessary to briefly sum up the main differences between these different periods. In the late 70s, the main urban problem to face up to was the huge number of slums on the outskirts of Madrid. An estimated number of more than 40.000 *chabolas* (self-built low-cost houses with no infrastructure or facilities) were to be replaced in one of the most important urban renewal processes in Europe, el *Programa de Remodelación de Barrios* (Villasante et al. 1989), characterized by its social orientation in its focus on rehousing families in the same 28 completely reconstructed neighbourhoods.

The *Plan General* (Comprehensive Urban Municipal Plan) for Madrid, approved in 1985, was strongly inspired by the idea of austerity as proposed by Italian urban planner Giuseppe Campos Venuti in his book *Urbanistica e austerità* (1978), very influential in Spain. Inspired by Campos Venuti's teachings, the *Plan* for Madrid focused on the existing city, thus breaking with a Spanish tradition of conceiving urbanism mainly as the process of extension of the existing cities, in the tradition of the nineteenth-century *ensanches* such as Cerdà's in Barcelona or Castro's in Madrid.

1985 is also the year that Spain entered into the European Community (EC). This meant not only the necessary alignment of Spanish policies to the European Directives but an important change in economic perspective. This shift came about, on one hand, because of the great increase in foreign investment, and on the other hand because the PSOE, the party behind the Socialist Government, had explicitly agreed to move away from the Marxist approach after the Extraordinary 28th Congress in September 1979, turning the PSOE into a modern European social democratic party after the German SPD model. Gross domestic product in Spain multiplied by 2.3 in four years and so did per capita income. As a result, real estate (in particular, housing, and thus, land planned for housing) prices experienced a never before seen increase. The *Plan General*, designed for an austere (local) scenario, suffered serious tension under new (global) circumstances, and in fact this turned to be the most important battlefield in municipal strategies and in the end, the main cause of the motion of no-confidence that put right-wing parties into the Town Hall of Madrid.

The next period can be characterized as of an extreme liberalism in terms of urban policies and planning. Official discourses on the need for deregulation and leaving market forces alone led the whole country and in particular, the city of Madrid to a period of extreme urban development. In 1997, the new *Plan General* for Madrid

was used as a laboratory for the new National Land Act of 1998, that essentially considered the whole national territory as suitable for urban development, except those specific areas with a high level of protection. In the case of Madrid, as well as the touristic Mediterranean Coast, urban development experienced an unprecedented intensity. In fact, all the land of the city of Madrid not included in Natural Parks or other protected areas were marked for extension. For years, between 1997 and 2007, the volume of building activity in Spain was much larger than in France, Germany and Italy combined, being each of these countries larger than Spain in terms of population.

The 2008 global crisis negatively affected Spain, where the financial sector depended on this urban development, and led to a necessary new change in the urban paradigm, exemplified in the new Land Act of 2008. However, it is only in the last years, and more particularly in the 2015–2019 period that effective attention has been paid to urban regeneration instead of urban extension. The Municipality of Madrid, in this last period, has started a series of urban programmes directed at regeneration. These initiatives were especially concerned with the nearby peripheries, often forgotten by both local authorities and the real-estate sector, much more focused on the centre and urban extension.

It is in this new context where the new 2030 Agenda gains importance, as a framework for orientating different spatial policies in the same direction, under the idea of *alignment*. One of the most interesting of these programmes, *Mad-re (Madrid Recupera/Madrid Recovers)*, synthesises the local urban regeneration strategy for the city of Madrid, with an integral approach to planning, understanding the city as a whole: urbanism, mobility, public space and social and environmental challenges considered as a part of a complex challenge. In terms of urban planning, the AGDUS, Department of Sustainable Urban Development, is currently focusing on a series of *AROP Áreas de Oportunidad*/areas of opportunity, areas with the potential to restart processes of integrated urban regeneration (IUR) in the peripheral districts of Madrid, with the complex goal of acting both as experiences of rebalancing the entire city and increasing quality of life for the population. These AROP should not only provide answers to present urban demands but also be able to face an uncertain future. Gaining physical and administrative complexity is the main tool with which this initiative can face uncertainty.

This text aims to describe and analyse the materials (programmes, funding, etc.) concerning different urban policies in Madrid that merge around proposed *Áreas de Oportunidad*, these being considered an effective synthesis of the complex approach and the most relevant tools for implementing the Urban Agenda's spatial goals. Many of these materials have been initially designed and developed by separate different departments of the local administration. Nevertheless, the Agenda has established a common framework so that these different programmes or actions align in a common direction, and this framework is based on explicit consideration of SDGs. In fact, this policy alignment can be considered the most original practical contribution of the implementation of Agenda 2030 in Madrid.

12.2 Alignment of *Áreas de Oportunidad*/Areas of Opportunity in Municipal Policies

The development of proposals for the planning of the areas of opportunity (AROP) identified in the framework of the *Estrategia de Regeneración Urbana del Ayuntamiento de Madrid* (urban regeneration strategy for the city of Madrid) is connected to and inserted into a more ambitious general framework, this being the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda was set by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 for the year 2030, of Resolution 70/1, which is structured around a collection of 17 goals, the so-called new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which implement and intensify the former Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015. It has been established that the principle of *universality* of these SDGs shall be compatible with the explicit evidence of the importance of sustainable development processes in each specific zone or area in the world, country, city or region, each one with its specific spatial dynamics, by identifying the interconnection and interdependence of the set of local processes in a global system.

In public administrations, this implies the need for the incorporation of these interconnections and interdependencies under the form and concept of co-responsibility in specific local Agendas, as in the case of Madrid, which tends to promote both the transformation on a local level seen from a global perspective and the complex, multiscale and multidimensional sustainable development processes.

As a way of underlining the importance of local action, a specific goal has been included, the SDG-11 Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities—“Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable”—which means both the recognition of the importance of the role of local and regional governments and the responsibility in the action administrations at this scale. It is not, exclusively, a question of identification and distribution of competences, which it is, of course, but the identification of local action as a key factor of a multiscale and multidimensional global engine.

12.2.1 Alignment of Local and National Policies: The Spanish 2030 Agenda

In 2016, in Quito (Habitat III, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development), the *New Urban Agenda (NUA)* is approved, launched and edited. This NUA serves as a key reference by implementing the contents of the local action framework. We have found it noteworthy that among the most important statements in the NUA, is the explicit importance of urban planning as “the mechanism by which much of the New Urban Agenda can be accomplished”.

... urban planning and design [should be the] instruments that support sustainable management and use of natural resources and land, appropriate compactness and density, polycentrism, and mixed uses, through infill or planned urban extension strategies as applicable, to

trigger economies of scale and agglomeration, strengthen food system planning, enhance resource efficiency, urban resilience, and environmental sustainability (article 51).

The “Plan de Acción para la Implementación de la Agenda 2030 *Hacia una Estrategia Española de Desarrollo Sostenible*” (Action Plan for the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda: *Towards a Spanish Strategy for Sustainable Development*) was approved at the end of June 2018 by the Government (Gobierno de España 2018). Almost all the ministerial departments participated in its preparation, as well as Autonomous Communities, local entities and civil society organizations.

In this Plan for the 2030 Agenda as presented by the Spanish Government, the Goal 11-Sustainable cities and communities emphasize this need for inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements, by remembering that the “traditional model of the Spanish city (known as “the Mediterranean city”) is compact, reasonably dense, complex, with a mixture of uses, medium size, with safe, healthy and quality urban spaces that guarantee the coexistence and encourage Social diversity”. This Mediterranean model provides us with a strong support for the “creation of inclusive cities, (...) a reciprocal reinforcement link between urbanization and development and to configure Human settlements based on equity, justice and peace, under the global principle of *no one and no place left behind* [as in (UN-Habitat 2018a)]”.

However, the document reminds us of some structural “problems and dysfunctions” in Spain:

- sprawl and disseminated urban growth, based on the adoption of legislation that encouraged land liberalization (adopted in 1998), extraordinary access to real-estate credit and abuse in its concession (which had a very direct influence on the development of the overblown housing construction sector), etc.
- segregation or zoning determined by uses and a high dependence on the private vehicle, with the consequent social, environmental and energetic impacts.
- lack of strategies and instruments of territorial management in many Autonomous Communities (i.e. regional governments with territorial jurisdiction) and the dynamics of local government financing, significantly bolstered by urban activity and the generation of profit.

The subsequent challenges for Spanish towns and cities are explained in Table 12.1.

To face these challenges, the Spanish Urban Agenda seems to be a good opportunity to recover a traditional urban model that has proved for decades to work very well and to instigate improvement strategies that will undoubtedly help to deal with the diverse and complex territorial and urban Spanish reality, a reality that requires the preservation of the rural–urban balance and to respond to the needs of cities and metropolitan areas, particularly those affected by present inequalities. It can be said that most the basis of all SDG-11 goals were somehow incorporated in the traditional Spanish urban model, in the recognition of the principle of sustainable urban and territorial development in the basic national legislation and within the strategic framework that will produce, for each and every one of the actors involved, an Urban

Table 12.1 Spatial challenges for towns and cities in Spain

Social challenges	Ageing
	Rural depopulation
	Risk of poverty and social exclusion
Environmental challenges	Air quality
	Waste management
	Disasters
	Climate change
Economic challenges	Unemployment
	Economic revitalization
Instrumental challenges	Regulation
	Planning
	Governance
	Funding

Source Authors Gobierno de España (2018)

Agenda aligned not only with the Agenda 2030, but also with the international urban Agendas (both EU and UN). In February 2018, a preliminary version of the document about the beginning of the public participation process was structured in the following sections:

1. A diagnosis of urban and rural reality in Spain
2. A strategic framework and a proposal of a decalogue of priority goals, with specific objectives for each one of those and a list of actions with which to achieve them (Tables 12.2 and 12.3).

A more thorough description of these goals can be read in Table 12.3.

Table 12.2 Strategic goals in Spanish Urban Agenda

Strategic goal 1	To make a rational use of the land, to preserve it and to protect it
Strategic goal 2	Avoid urban sprawl and revitalize the existing city
Strategic goal 3	To prevent and reduce the effects of climate change
Strategic goal 4	To manage the resources in a sustainable way and to promote the circular economy
Strategic goal 5	Promote proximity and sustainable mobility
Strategic goal 6	To promote social cohesion and equity
Strategic goal 7	Promote urban economy
Strategic goal 8	Guarantee access to housing
Strategic goal 9	To lead and promote digital innovation
Strategic goal 10	Improve instruments and governance

Source Authors Gobierno de España (2018)

Table 12.3 Precision and specific development on the contents of the set of strategic goals in Spanish Urban Agenda

Access to housing	From now until 2030, to ensure access for all people to adequate, safe and affordable basic housing and services and to improve slum areas
Public transport	From now until 2030, to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all and to improve road safety, in particular by expanding public transport, paying special attention to the needs of vulnerable people, women, children, people with disabilities and the elderly
Inclusive and sustainable urbanization	From now until 2030, to increase inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable planning and management of human settlements in all countries
Cultural and natural heritage	To redouble efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage
Disasters and vulnerability reduction	From now until 2030, to significantly reduce the number of casualties caused by disasters, including those related to water, and those affected by them, and to significantly reduce the direct economic losses caused by disasters in comparison with the global Gross Domestic Product, with special emphasis on the protection of the poor and people in situations of vulnerability
Waste and Pollution in cities	From now until 2030, to reduce the negative environmental impact per capita of the cities, paying specific attention to the quality of the air and the management of municipal and other wastes
Access to green areas and secure public spaces	From now until 2030, to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green areas and public spaces, in particular for women and children, people with disabilities and the elderly

Source Authors Gobierno de España (2018)

These more precise objectives are further connected to a series of indicators and thus become the main base for the implementation of local objectives aligned to the national strategy.

12.2.2 Local Policy Alignment. The Strategic Role of Madrid 2030 Agenda

Prior to the Spanish Agenda, in 2018, the Municipality of Madrid presented the document *Alineación de Políticas Públicas Municipales a los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible* (Alignment of Municipal Public Policies to the SDGs), under the figure

of a *Estrategia del Ayuntamiento de Madrid para la implementación de la Agenda 2030* (strategy for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda), entitled *Madrid 2030: una ciudad para todas las personas y todas las generaciones* (Madrid 2030: a city for all the people and all the generations) (Ayuntamiento de Madrid 2018).

The main point of note in this document is its voluntary and explicit vocation of being an effective strategy of *spatial location* of SDGs. This idea of location, in our specific context and linked to our specific lines of interest, goes further than the local competences and is reflected to a certain extent under a series of specific *spatial locations*. Spatial aspects become key factors in implementing SDGs.

The keyword is *alignment*, the alignment of municipal policies with SDGs. Madrid has implemented a set of spatial policies, plans and projects in progress (“actions”), with different stages of implementation. According to a global strategy, adapting to the strategies implies the alignment of those actions. This alignment should not only not be a negative change, but should reinforce the actions, individually and as a whole.

Within these actions in progress in Madrid, aligned with a common strategy, and with specific spatial–urban effects, we must cite the following:

- Plan Mad-re Madrid Recupera,
- Plan Estratégico de Descentralización Municipal,
- Plan Energía y Cambio Climático,
- Madrid + Natural,
- Madrid Ciudad de los Cuidados,
- Madrid Cultura Abierta.

The planning of the identified *Áreas de Oportunidad* (areas of opportunity, AROP) does not only involve the development of some specific areas with current specific conditions that give us this idea of opportunity. In fact, each AROP must become a specific example in the process of action alignment suitable for replicating in different parts of the city. The planning and development of a particular fragment of the city should not only imply a decision for the effective transformation of the fragment, but the effective beginning of a set of interrelations with the rest of the district and the city. Seen through a supra-local lens, the development of each area and as a whole should eventually mean an effective reorientation of the urban development processes in line with the SDGs. This is the opportunity to synthesize a set of actions aligned to SDGs, by integrating multidimensional and multi-scale aspects, from a systemic perspective. In this policy alignment under the Madrid 2030 Agenda, these are the most important programmes or actions with spatial effects:

12.2.2.1 Spatial/Planning Oriented Actions. Plan Mad-Re Madrid Recupera (Madrid Recovers)

The *Estrategia de Regeneración Urbana para la ciudad de Madrid* (strategy for the urban regeneration of the city of Madrid) has designed a comprehensive plan to regenerate in the medium and long term each of the districts outside the M-30 ring

road and the Central *Almendra* (almond, so named because of the shape of the city centre). From an urban perspective, a model of a close, cohesive and liveable city has been proposed. In the *Estrategia*, the multiscale vision and perspective (city, district and neighbourhood), the implementation of the strategy through projects, the integral vision and the collaborative experience are also established as main principles.

This strategy has five main objectives:

- The rehabilitation of buildings and the regeneration of neighbourhoods, in particular those built up from peripheral lot processes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and modern open block units built in the 50s–70s decades of the last century.
- The diffusion of centrality, breaking with the negative consequences of the traditional centre–periphery dialectics. The objective is multiscale generation of urban complexity.
- A new culture of mobility. A new structure of multimodal travel distribution connected to programs of environmental quality improvement (air, noise). Policies should prioritise residents and pedestrians.
- The requalification of public space.
- The reinforcement of the green spaces environmental network.

Much of the Mad-Re programme is inspired by the recommendations of the 2007 *Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities*, which also inspired the policies, acts and regulations united under the common idea of the 3Rs, rehabilitation, regeneration and renewal that inspires our current legislation. This framework explicitly delineates areas of intervention, and more specifically the *AROP Áreas de Oportunidad*, which are defined as “areas to be planned and developed in strategic locations that would mean an effective possibility of improving the configuration of the district”. Among these areas, we can find obsolete industrial areas, diverse scale urban facilities in different conditions and levels of service, urban wastelands, etc. It is important to state that these areas are not necessarily delimited in the current Madrid Urban Plan. Many of them are new areas with potential to improve the urban structure of districts in strategic locations. The planning may consist of regulation of uses for a new urban centrality, the rehabilitation of obsolete spaces or activities, a new design for derelict areas or wastelands, or frequently, a complex combination of different situations.

12.2.2.2 Abandoning Urban Unbalances and Improving Quality of Life in Peripheral Districts: Plan Estratégico de Descentralización Municipal (Strategic Plan for Municipal Decentralization)

Promoted by the *Área de Gobierno de Coordinación Territorial* (Department of Territorial Coordination), the aim of this Plan is to improve the quality of life in the neighbourhoods, with a fair distribution of resources and contributing to the territorial re-balance. This initiative is of great importance in a traditionally unequal city like Madrid.

In this Plan, two basic principles are to be applied:

- Subsidiarity, understood in this context as locating the processes of decision-making and management as close as possible to the citizens affected.
- Asymmetry and cooperation, envisioned as the recognition of the differences between districts and strengthened cooperation where needed. The recognition of the differences and identities of each district becomes a basic goal. In Madrid, peripheral districts have traditionally been considered as a unit, as a homogeneous “periphery”. The idea is to identify, empower and generate an identity for each one of them. A means for this is to enhance life in the neighbourhood, giving each neighbourhood the necessary tools to carry out the daily life of all its people.

The main alignment of policies intended to eliminate inequalities and to improve quality of life in peripheral districts is reflected in the selection of the AROP. All of them are located outside the *Almendra Central*, except in the case of the district of Tetuán, a working-class district in the north-western part of the *Almendra*.

12.2.2.3 Aligning the Economic Strategy to Spatial Oriented Policies: Fondos de Reequilibrio Territorial del Ayuntamiento de Madrid (Funding for Territorial Rebalancing)

Every year, the same *Área de Gobierno de Coordinación Territorial y Cooperación Público-Social del Ayuntamiento de Madrid* presents the Programme *Fondo de Reequilibrio Territorial* (FRT), as the main tool for the economic rebalancing of the city in order to improve people’s quality of life.

Under this framework of the FRT, a number of projects are developed. These are a series of interventions in the districts that need them most according to the vulnerability index that classifies them according to their needs and shortcomings. It is an effective tool for improving the cohesion of the city under the principles of co-responsibility and territorial solidarity. In order to distribute the budgets of the FRT, the 128 neighbourhoods and 21 districts of the city are analysed and catalogued annually, according to a set of 5 dimensions and 13 indicators.

Through the FRT and by demand of the districts, concrete and specific actions are carried out to prevent and tackle the causes and main problems derived from the imbalances within the territory of Madrid. To achieve this, projects have been designed around 4 major lines of action or needs:

- Social, cultural and educational projects.
- Housing (managed by the *Empresa Municipal de Vivienda y Suelo EMVS*-Agency for Housing and Land).
- Employment, training and insertion (mainly managed by the *Agencia para el Empleo AE*- Agency for Employment).
- Actions to improve public urban spaces and facilities, including integral rehabilitation of basic facilities in bad conditions.

The obvious spatial/urban dimension of these lines and their corresponding actions, and the intersection of goals with those of the AROP imply an additional need for alignment with the other programmes/policies that share this spatial dimension. This is effectively reflected in the role played by this department in the supervision of the AROP design.

12.2.2.4 Combining Environment and Urban Planning and Design: Plan de Energía y Cambio Climático (Plan for Energy and Climate Change)

The City Council of Madrid passed the *Plan de Energía y Cambio Climático de la ciudad de Madrid—Horizonte 2020* in the year 2014.

The Plan is designed to be the main tool to direct the city processes towards an efficient use of energy and a low-carbon economy, as a means to fight climate change and contribute to the economic, social and territorial cohesion of Madrid. It proposes a new energy model for Madrid whose general objectives, for 2020, are to achieve a reduction of more than 35% of the total emissions of greenhouse gases, compared with 2005, and to reduce 20% in the final energy consumption, compared with 2011.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Plan includes a series of measures and actions, gathered in 10 lines of work.

The plan explicitly points to the key sectors with direct influence on sustainable urban development, and the impact of housing and transport. Apart from the specific mention of “urbanism and buildings”, the plan includes a series of lines with direct impact on the spatial planning criteria: green zones, water infrastructures, efficient management of facilities, services and processes (generation and distribution transport and logistics).

The Plan has two principle goals:

- The reduction of the use of the private motorized vehicle.

It is a fundamental priority to increase efficiency in the use of energy in the transport sector. Among the proposed actions that will contribute to this measure are those taken from the *Plan de Calidad del Aire—Plan A* (Air Quality Plan), which includes direct actions of traffic restriction and the promotion of modal interchange to public transport. These actions were adopted by the *Plan de Energía y Cambio Climático* as a part of its own action plan, creating areas of residential priority and vehicle traffic restriction; new pedestrian areas; road capacity reduction, implementation of automatically regulated parking services; bus platforms and lanes; barrier suppression, secure access; and optimization of spaces in the bus-stop infrastructure.

- Promotion of non-mechanized forms of transport

The *Plan A* designs specific actions both for the promotion of cyclist mobility (such as the extension of infrastructure or the creation of a public bicycle rental service) and for the promotion of pedestrian mobility (such as the establishment of a strategy for the creation of a network of pedestrian–priority itineraries).

In the case of the AROP, the aim is not only to provide the answers to a diagnosis of urban problems, but also to set the basis for a general adaptation to environmental challenges, particularly by using nature-based solution as the ones promoted by the programme *Madrid + Natural*.

12.2.2.5 Use of Nature-Based Solutions: Madrid + Natural

This programme, promoted by Municipality of Madrid, has the aim of implementing nature-based solutions to adapt the city to the effects of climate change, this is to say, adjustment to climate change based on nature.

Within the framework of a local strategy of adaptation to the effects of climate change, Madrid has developed an innovative vision of urban regeneration by using nature-based solutions. Up to 16 feasible solutions have been identified, which can be implemented through seemingly small interventions of urban acupuncture but with a high potential for replication. The *Madrid + Natural* Project presents a vision of an urban network of natural solutions, where the small interventions proposed connect with the large green spaces and natural elements of the city of Madrid. A well-designed and developed *green and blue infrastructure* system that links public spaces, parks, natural areas and buildings with “living” roofs and facades, contributing as a whole to the resilience of the city against climate change.

It has been stated that “adaptation solutions to climate change based on nature are an opportunity to imagine a Madrid in which green and blue gains importance, generating a friendlier environment for people, more resistant to external impacts, a more cohesive and resilient city, a *Madrid + Natural* (More Natural Madrid)”.

12.2.2.6 Gender and Sexual Diversity Mainstreaming: Plan Estratégico para la Igualdad de Género de la ciudad de Madrid 2018–2020 (Strategic Plan for Gender Equality)

This Plan intends to implement the principle of equality in all municipal policies carried out in the city of Madrid with a transversal and integrated approach. The introduction of the integrated gender approach means not only implementing specific policies from the *Área de Gobierno de Políticas de Género y Diversidad* (Department of Gender and Diversity Policies), but also transforming municipal structures to incorporate the principle of equality and non-discrimination in all areas: economy, employment, culture, sports, urbanism, health, security, social and political participation, media, social services, etc.

According to the Plan, “equality policies are implemented through a dual approach with simultaneous and complementary implementation of specific and cross-cutting policies. Specific policies are essential in facing the needs of women and improving their social situation and, through gender *mainstreaming*, the goal is to include the principle of equality and the gender perspective horizontally in all areas of political activity, introducing all of the specific objectives for the achievement of equality in

each of them. Both are essential for the achievement of equality”. The transversal model, *mainstreaming*, implies the necessary introduction of the gender perspective in any policy and programme that directly affects the government and citizens, which is the case of the development of the AROP.

12.2.2.7 Improving Daily Life for All Ages: Madrid Ciudad de los Cuidados (Madrid City of Care)

This is part of the Strategy for Public Health of the City Council of Madrid. It establishes a series of priorities: on one hand, actions for the improvement of people’s daily lives, and on the other, the job/duty and the perspective of care as a determinant aspect of the living conditions of the population, introducing the social objective of attributing value to the care of life, by using the definition of *care* of d’Argemir (2015): “Activities related to the daily management and maintenance of life, health and well-being of people”.

The main areas around which the policy of care in the Municipal administration of Madrid is articulated are:

- The city that takes care of the public space and the common life
- The city that carefully manages and administrates
- The city sensitive to everyday life (well-being)
- The city that incorporates care in the production system

These areas are closely linked to the spatial planning and design of neighbourhoods and districts. This includes aspects of appropriation and friendliness.

Thus, the interventions tend towards increasing the amount of green spaces, making certain sections of the city pedestrian only, the creation of cyclist itineraries, sustainable mobility, the improvement of public parks and their configuration to promote the meeting of people, the design of lighting as a strategic element of perceived safety, efficient use of energy and progressive use of renewable energies, disease control, etc.

Adding it all up, these initiatives are not only people-oriented, but also incorporate nature and the environment as an object of care, to ensure the sustainability of life.

12.2.2.8 Participation Processes in Decision-Making: Madrid Cultural Abierta (Madrid Open Culture)

The *Área de Cultura del Ayuntamiento de Madrid* (Department of Culture) promotes laboratories and workshops as a space for the participation of neighbours in the city’s institutions and public cultural policies. The aim is to generate spaces for dialogue between cultural agents, municipal managers and citizens, as an opportunity to work on the design and development of future actions and programs.

The department has links to the strategy and Action Plan for the improvement of the district cultural centres, sometimes forgotten because of interest in a “higher” and centralized idea of culture.

During the process of implementation of the AROP, public participation becomes crucial.

12.2.2.9 Planning for the Future: *Imagina Madrid* (Imagine Madrid)

Intermediae is an experimental space promoted by the *Área de Gobierno de Cultura y Deportes*/Department of Culture and Sports of the city of Madrid, located in Matadero Madrid (an extraordinary cultural centre dedicated to contemporary creation in the once abandoned installations of the old slaughterhouses) since the year 2007.

Imagina Madrid is the programme led by *Intermediae* that promotes participative construction of public space in the city.

Through the implementation of collective creation processes involving both citizens and artists, *Imagina Madrid* aims to transform the public space of the city through actions of urban intervention and cultural activation.

They propose places to be transformed, the spaces are chosen because of their peculiarities, difficulties and potential, and proposals are made of how to inhabit them without forgetting their history and identity. Public space becomes a laboratory in which to investigate not only its urban dimensions, but also its cultural and relational dynamics.

12.3 Discussion and Conclusion

In September 2017, an international meeting took place in Madrid under the topic *A New Justice for the New Urban Agenda*. Considering that Madrid’s Mayor, Carmena, is a retired judge, the focus on the strong link between spatial justice and the New Urban Agenda is highly significant, more so in Madrid, one of the most unequal European capitals. Just as Soja (2010) pointed out when discussing the impact of the so-called New Economy in the rise of poverty and social polarization in cities like New York or Los Angeles, almost a quarter of a century of urban economic restructuring under right-winged neoliberal policies have turned Madrid into the most segregated capital city in Europe. The most significant point is that, after the 2008 crisis, when in some other European cities, such as Amsterdam, the impact of the crisis contributed to reducing segregation, the lack of an idea of a common urban project for Madrid led to the opposite, a dramatic surge in segregation processes (Marcinićzak et al. 2017). Although “in general, it is taken for granted that socio-economic segregation is a product of socio-economic inequality, and that growing inequality results in increasing segregation” (Massey 1996), in the case of Madrid “a relatively small increase in income inequality may relate to significantly growing residential segregation” (Marcinićzak et al. 2017, p. 370), turning the usual linear

relationship into a more extreme one. This means that in fact the effects of the crisis in spatial segregation have been much more significant in Madrid than in the rest of European cities in the 2008–2017 decade. “It can be shown that in 2011 the paradigmatic global city, London, is not the most segregated in Europe anymore; in fact, it is clearly less divided than Madrid” (*ibidem*, p. 371).

It is remarkable that Saskia Sassen, in the 2017 Madrid Meeting on Spatial Justice, spoke about the need of “engendering a larger and more inclusive movement towards a New Regulatory Order”; in order to fracture the structure of the typical *polarized city*, she once theorized about (Sassen 1991) and that Madrid has undoubtedly turned out to be.

In our opinion, this has much to do with the need to adapt both governance and planning instruments to the complexity of the city, instead of trying to simplify urban problems according to the very simple and compartmentalized structure of our local administration. According to Bruno Latour, it is time to face the *plot* to deny reality (denial of climate change, social inequality, rise of poverty) with a complex view of reality and particularly the real soil and land each city belongs to, a *terrestrial*, multiscale, interdisciplinary point of view (Latour 2017, p. 65). Latour reminds us that “the question of territorial inequalities—in the broader sense—also arises with what I call the ‘geo-social classes’. There is also the papal encyclical *Laudato si’*, which makes the link between inequalities and ecology and which makes it possible to mobilize politics in a different way. The most urgent task is also the slowest: a people has to be found that corresponds to the question of ecology, just as there was, for a long time, a people that corresponded to the social question. Belonging to territorial spaces is still too abstract an idea. To find the link between the ecological crisis and the social question, we need to identify the territory, the land, the habitat where such a people live” (Latour 2015).

In Madrid alignment of policies has much to do with this possibility to mobilize politics in a different way, by breaking walls between administrations, not only between traditionally *isolated* municipal departments, but also by introducing complexity in top-down and bottom-up processes, from the people and their habitat up to the international institutions and *vice versa*. This different way relates to Ulrich Beck’s words to change the question to “‘what can global warming do for us’? rather than what can we do to ‘solve’ global warming” (Beck 2016). In the dramatic transformation of the world, we are facing, if there is no longer such a thing as a purely natural or artificial event, policies need to face the uncertainty of this future by introducing multi-level complexity as the main tool. As the most complex part natural, part artificial creations ever, cities are no longer to be considered problem, but the solution (Ruiz Sánchez 2012). This becomes clearer in the revision of SDG-11 in the *High-level Political Forum HLPF 2018, United Nations central platform for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals*, where it is pointed out that “urban areas will be increasingly critical for achieving all SDGs and integrating the social, economic and environmental goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda” (UN-Habitat 2018b).

This integration of goals is approached in Madrid through this idea of policy alignment, and in particular in programmes of Urban Regeneration. Thus, we are

able to speak of a complex city-oriented policy, blurring the distinction between various disciplines, and more particularly between theory and practice. The idea is to recover an alignment between the real city and actual and effective policies. This must be put in context with the idea of *strengthening the interconnection*, not only between Agendas but between reality and the set of instruments for its governance. If “issues such as climate change, housing and slums, financing, sustainable production and consumption, inequalities, infrastructure and basic services, gender equality, gender-based violence, food security and nutrition, and migration are inextricably linked to cities [...], policies and strategies that respond to those issues together can transform potential synergies into holistic action” (UN-General Assembly Economic and Social Council, 2018). This report reminds us that “more than half of the goal targets have an urban component” (*ibid.* § 11) and explicitly “encourages to consider intersectoral interventions” (*ibid.* § 66) and indicates that “effective spatial planning and management, including the use of territorial approaches, plays a key role in enabling the effective implementation of the Agenda at the local level” (*ibid.* § 69). This territorial approach is related to Latour’s *terrestrial* concept and very close to our ideas of *urban complexity* and *complex approach* (Ruiz Sánchez, Risueño Muzás and Ardura Urquiaga 2014). This UN report cites Madrid as one of the cities that “are incorporating urban planning approaches into their local development plans and connecting these to the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda” (UN-General Assembly Economic and Social Council, *ibid.* § 71).

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Chapter 13

The Complexity of the Metropolitan Planning and Governance in Milan: The Unintentional Innovations of an Implicit Urban Agenda



Stefano Di Vita

Abstract In the city of Milan, in Italy, complex processes of redefinition and rescaling of the urban agenda have been taking place for the last 15 years, reshaping the urban identity through a mix of social mobilization and innovation, private investments and public policies. Referring to this context, this chapter specifically analyses how processes of redefinition and rescaling of both urban planning tools and issues, and metropolitan government and governance, have been working with complex multi-scalar urban phenomena. Consequently, it reflects on how recent institutional rearrangements (beginning with the establishment of the new Milan Metropolitan City) are or are not able to face multi-scalar urban dynamics.

Keywords Multi-scalar Milan · Post-Fordist urban change · Post-crisis urban change · Multi-level planning and governance

13.1 Introduction

The urban agenda is grounded in the interaction between different choices of policy and is influenced by multiple factors of political and cultural nature. It depends on the dominant rhetoric in both the political discourse and public opinion: that is, it depends on the political cycle (at the same time, local, national and supranational), as well as on the construction of problems by the media and on the general vision that predominates in the civil society. This means that the development and implementation of the urban agenda do not lie exclusively in the hands of politicians or public administrations. It is due to a large number of issues, often difficult to identify clearly. Nevertheless, it is impossible to deny that the public action influence the city agenda through a selective process which places some collective issues at the top and excludes others (Pasqui et al. 2017).

According to this background, Milan seems to be an interesting case study. On the one side, it is living a positive moment, of which Expo 2015 represented the symbolic

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event: it is a dynamic and welcoming city, able to attract talents and tourists thanks to its universities and excellences (finance, fashion and design, economies of culture and communication, health and related technologies). On the other side, until now the redefinition of its urban agenda has not been able to take into account that Milan is not only its vibrant metropolitan core, that has strengthened its attractiveness, but also a multi-scalar and multifaceted city with contradictions and internal differences and inequalities. According to Gabriele Pasqui (Pasqui 2018b):

- Milan is the central city, historically narrow in its municipal borders, but increasingly dynamic and attractive for different populations: not only national and international business tourists, students and city users, but also migrants and (more recently) cultural tourists. Over the years, this city has changed incrementally, also through molecular processes and mechanisms of social mobilization (promoted by cultural, social and economic actors), and not only through unitary plans or projects.
- Milan is also a wider city that extends, with variable geometry, to a densely urbanized area, more or less corresponding to the new institution of the Metropolitan City. This city includes some of the most important recent or potential transformations and, at the same time, some of the stronger contrasts between economic and social dynamisms and new forms of inequality and fragility (Centro Studi PIM 2016).
- Milan is then a post-metropolitan urban region (Balducci et al. 2017), that extends between the Pre-Alps foothills (involving the provincial areas of Novara, Varese, Como, Lecco, Monza-Brianza and Bergamo) and the Po Valley irrigated plain (encompassing the provincial areas of Pavia and Lodi) (OECD 2006). This large urban region is structured on a complex context of interrelations made by long and short material and intangible networks (Magatti and Gherardi 2010): from environmental and infrastructural connections made by green, blue and grey networks, to economic connections between supply chains and territorial clusters (Bolocan Goldstein 2018).
- Furthermore, according to the dual logic of competition and complementarity, Milan is part of an enlarged city-region; that is, a polycentric urban network that extends (at least) from Turin to Verona and Venice (up to Trieste), and to Bologna and Rimini (up to Ancona), and in which infrastructural corridors and functional clusters play an essential role (Perulli and Pichierri 2010; Del Fabbro 2019).
- Finally, Milan is a gateway city to global flows; that is, a connector city, located in international networks which go beyond geographical proximities and mobilize significant financial investments (Taylor 2004; Bolocan Goldstein 2015).

This chapter aims at understanding whether and how the ongoing processes of redefinition and rescaling of the Milan urban agenda have been taking into account this articulation of urban phenomena and dynamics.

13.2 The Multi-scalar Milan: The Spatial Interface Between the Italian Economy and Society, and the World Networks

Into the wider Northern Italy city-region, the Milan urban core and its wider and very productive urban region have been representing the Italian cultural and economic capital since the beginning of the industrial and urban development process, that started after the Italian unification in 1861 and increased, in particular, after the Second World War: both in the central city and in the linear city extending all along the Pre-Alps foothills (from Novara to Bergamo—and up to Brescia—passing through Varese, Como, Monza and the Brianza area). At the same time, they correspond to one of the crucial European nodes of world urban networks (OECD 2006), that has been recently strengthened by—but not only—the Expo 2015 (Pasqui 2015; Di Vita and Morandi 2018).

On the background of its urban dynamics (their regional-scale spatiality, and their macro-regional, national and European connections), this multi-scalar Milan (Pasqui 2018b) is maintaining a leading position, in Italy, in terms of investments, entrepreneurships, technological progress, social innovation, and urban change (Armondi and Di Vita 2018). It is the only Italian city able to attract highly skilled human capital and relevant foreign direct investments (Camera di Commercio di Milano 2016). Being part of a wider supranational network of European economic engines (including Munich and the federated State of Bayern, and Stuttgart and the federated State of Baden-Wurttemberg, in Germany; Lyon and the administrative region of Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes, in France; Barcelona and the autonomous community of Catalonia, in Spain), the Milan urban core and its urban region (together with its administrative region, Lombardy) are one of the main and most meaningful European spatial and productive platforms: that is, cities and urban regions which, according to their productive trends and performances, represent diversified economic hubs in transition from the third to the fourth industrial revolution (Armondi et al. 2019) and with strong international aptitudes, but without function of political capital (Assolombarda 2018).

As in other European metropolises, the economic and demographic growth of both the Milan municipal and metropolitan areas concluded in 1970s, when the production and residential relocation from the main city to the neighbouring municipalities and the external areas of the urban region intensified. Consequently, since the 1980s and, in particular, from the late 1990s and the early 2000s, the service sector metamorphosis and the real estate overproduction of the city (Pasqui 2018b) spread from the urban core to its surrounding areas, even by contributing to the partial substitution of both former and traditional large industrial plants and small manufacturing buildings with new urban functions and activities (Armondi and Di Vita 2018).

Even though the world financial and economic crisis has affected the economic, social, institutional and spatial dynamics of urban change, that had already positively distinguished the Milan urban core and region from other former industrial cities in Italy, its economic performances have remained better than in other urban areas of

the country: for instance, in terms of GDP,¹ growth of new firms, foreign direct investments, or limited decrease of real estate prices (Armondi and Di Vita 2018), as well as unemployment rate and limited social costs (Pasqui 2018b). In general terms, the multi-scalar Milan, that still corresponds to the Italian richest area and makes a fundamental contribution to the entire country competitiveness, has been favoured by a polyarchy of public and private actors: during the still ongoing global crisis, these multiple actors have been able to overcome the downgrade of large real estate projects (which had characterized the urban change from 1980s to the first 2000s), as well as to mobilize local resources and to attract external investments, talents and digital technologies (Armondi and Bruzzese 2017).

Together, the Milan urban core and region confirm themselves as the main Italian financial and economic hub, and they have been developed as the core of the Italian knowledge and creative economy, with a growing sharing approach (Mariotti et al. 2017) and strong connections with its still vibrant manufacturing background (Armondi et al. 2019). The Milan urban region offers specialized productions of services (i.e. health, high education and research, finance). At the same time, it still provides local and traditional economies related to the *Made in Italy* (i.e. fashion, design, home furnishing and fittings) and other specialized productions of goods (i.e. mechanic and mechatronics; chemical and pharmaceutical; metal, plastic and rubber manufacturing; textile, clothing, leather, footwear and related mechanics; aviation and logistics) in a diffused system of small and artisan firms, scattered in different districts and often linked with global giant brands (Unioncamere 2013; Centro Studi PIM 2016).

Despite the proliferation of vacant areas and spaces, led by the 1970s and 1980s de-industrialization and service metamorphosis phases, and by the 2008 financial and economic crisis, the persisting diversity of economic sectors and noteworthy quota of manufacturing industry (in particular, outside the urban core) have shown that this has been a long and complex transition from a mainly, but not exclusively, industrial-based economy to a mainly, but not only, service-based one. At the same time, they have contributed to reduce the vulnerability and boost the resilience of the Milan urban core and region to this relevant socio-economic and spatial change (Armondi and Di Vita 2018). However, the combination of different productive and urban development phases and trends has led to the overlapping of opposite tensions and impulses, which are trans-scalar, difficult to manage and demand for new urban policy and planning approaches and solutions: from the centrifugal socio-spatial dynamics of the dense urban core, to the centripetal socio-spatial dynamics of the wider urban region (Bolocan Goldstein 2018).

The recent success of the Expo 2015² has contributed to reconsolidate the local and international attractiveness of the city, as well as its positive image as one of

¹A the end of 2017, the Milan GDP is above the 2008 levels by +3.1%, whereas Italy is still under the 2008 levels by -4.5% (Assolombarda 2018).

²According to recent data, in the period 2012–2020, the Expo produced an added value for 13.9 billion € and an additional production for 31.6 billion €, together with 115,000 new jobs and 10,000 new firms (Dell'Acqua et al. 2016).

the most attractive European cities. This mega-event has catalyzed and accelerated several already ongoing trends, as well as flagship and infrastructural projects, which have been making a relevant contribution to the transition of the multi-scalar Milan from city mainly oriented to production, finance and business tourism, to urban region characterized also by several leisure opportunities. Art and cultural events are growing in several districts of the urban core (Bruzzese and Tamini 2014; Bruzzese 2018), also thanks to the development of new art and cultural facilities (from the Fondazione Feltrinelli, the Fondazione Prada and the Silos Armani, to the Museo delle Culture—MUDEC, the Museo del Novecento, and the Museo della Pietà Rondanini) and productive clusters (made by incubators, co-working spaces, makerspaces, and other hybrid workplaces dedicated to innovative productions of goods and services), which are often located in former industrial buildings or vacant spaces.

However, against the backdrop of the consolidation of the multi-scalar Milan as Italian main epicentre of the current metamorphosis towards a knowledge and creative economy and society, this change has not involved yet the entire urban core and region, that is still formed by outskirts affected by phenomena of “poor metropolitanization” (Garofoli 2016). In contrast with their main centralities and strengths, both the urban core and the urban region are affected by diffuse phenomena of poverty. In the only Milan municipal area, even though the population has returned to grow (1,369,000 inhabitants in 2016, that is +75,000 from 2008), about 20% are migrants, 16% are elderly,³ and 330,000 are the mono-nuclear families (Pasqui 2018b). As the processes of socio-spatial polarization and segregation are increasing, over the last 10 years the growth of homeless (+21%) and of poor citizens (+13%) has been impressive, and the demand of social housing is expanding (24,000 requests in comparison with 70,000 existing units, of which 10,000 vacant) (Pasqui 2018b).

The decrease of welfare, the growth of social fragility, and the raising contrasts between excellences and poorness are typical of contemporary world cities. However, in the case of Milan, it is not possible to ignore the responsibility of the planning and governance system: this is traditionally very fragmented, complex and weak and has not been able, yet, to develop a shared strategic approach and a broad urban regional vision, which could be able to address trans-scalar issues and effectively orient public policies. “Milan has confirmed its reputation as a ‘polyarchic city’ (Dente et al. 2005), not linked to just a unique centre of power, in which the governance coalition, the interplay of actors, and the interests in the urban making and remaking have always been complex, multi-layered and multifaceted (Perulli 2016)” (Armondi and Di Vita 2018, p. 9).

On this background, this chapter highlights that the post-Fordist Milan experimentation with urban planning tools and metropolitan government (in Part 3), and the post-crisis Milan experimentation with urban planning issues and multi-level governance (in Part 4) can be considered as unplanned innovations of an implicit urban agenda.

³That is, people who are more than 75 years old.

13.3 The Post-Fordist Milan: Experimenting with Innovative Urban Planning Tools and Metropolitan Government

The Milan service sector metamorphosis and real estate overproduction phase, that started in the 1980s, corresponded not only to the planning and government of unprecedented large urban transformations, but also to the experimentation with innovative urban planning tools and metropolitan government. The previous phase of urban growth and development for the Milan municipal area,⁴ that began after the 1861 Italian unification and following industrial take-off, and concluded in the 1970s,⁵ was marked by different typologies of urban plans, which were connected to the development of both the legislative framework and the cultural background of society and planners:

- the urban expansion plans, such as the Piano Beruto 1884–1889 (2000 ha of new urban fabric to host 500,000 new inhabitants), the Piano Pavia Masera 1910–1912 (2200 ha of new urban fabric to host 560,000 new inhabitants) and the Piano Albertini 1933–1934 (10,000 ha of new urban fabric to host 3,650,000 new inhabitants), which took their names from their planners;
- the urban general plans, such as the first rationalist plan (the PRG 1953, aimed at supporting the already ongoing industrial development and high urban densification, also promoted by previous post-war reconstruction plans and building speculations) and the second rationalist plan (the Variante Generale al PRG 1976–1980, aimed at managing the uncontrolled development of the tertiary sector in order to preserve the productive activities, but contradicted by the ongoing processes of de-industrialization⁶) (Morandi 2007).

Traditionally, all these Milan Municipality's plans were more or less contradicted or anticipated in their implementation by spontaneous urban phenomena. Therefore, these frequent contradictions and anticipations encouraged the development of an experimental approach (even though, often not intentional or aware) in the urban planning and government of the following phase: that is, the post-Fordist phase of urban change, when traditional urban plans and government became more and more inadequate to new socio-economic and spatial trends, and when local policy-makers (more or less intentionally) avoided to plan and govern sometimes impetuous socio-

⁴That today extends to 18,100 ha and hosts 1,350,000 inhabitants (Source: ISTAT 2016).

⁵When the population of the Milan municipal area exceeded 1,700,000 inhabitants (Morandi 2007).

⁶This plan was very powerful from the ideological point of view, as it aimed (i) to decentralize new residential and business developments outside the municipal boundaries; (ii) to distribute extensively public facilities and areas for community services; (iii) to safeguard the industrial sites within the central city. However, it was not able to stop some of the ongoing socio-economic and spatial phenomena connected to the productive activities. The following industrial reconversion phase into offices and residential uses of small and large brownfields was handled outside the plan framework and was negotiated through a "case by case" procedure of variation to the zoning provision of the general plan.

economic and spatial dynamics in a rich context of cultural and economic resources (Pasqui 2018b).

This Milan's widespread cultural tendency to innovation and to be ahead of other Italian cities had already expressed, even in the field of the urban planning and government, immediately after the end of the Second World War, when the issues of the metropolitan planning and government became clear.

After the first metropolitan scale vision of urban functions and infrastructures, developed by the *Architetti Riuniti*⁷ in 1945, since the 1950s (and before than in other Italian cities) the debate around the planning and government of the Milan metropolitan area became very important within the local institutions. According to the National Urban Planning Act,⁸ in 1959, the Ministry of Public Works established the Piano Intercomunale Milanese (PIM) and its borders (thus, including 35 Municipalities of the former Milan provincial area), and it provided the Milan Municipality with the power to coordinate it. After its institution, the PIM borders, features and competences changed along the years, according to both the continuous urban growth and the approval of following national and regional acts.⁹ Nevertheless, the role of PIM was more important from the cultural point of view than from the political one. Different kinds of metropolitan visions and plans were elaborated, such as the very well-known Turbine model plan¹⁰ (in 1963), Linear city model plan¹¹ (in 1965) and Comprensorio 21 Territorial Plan¹² (in 1982). However, their implementation was almost always negatively affected by political conflicts between/within the Municipalities.

On this long background, the 1980s service sector metamorphosis and real estate overproduction phase corresponded to the maturation of an already ongoing reflection about the updating of the urban planning tools to the new post-Fordist socio-economic and spatial dynamics, as well as the upscaling of the urban planning and government at the metropolitan scale. At this regard, the Documento Direttore del Progetto Passante, approved by the Milan Municipality in 1984, was the first step of this experimentation, even though this kind of innovation was not completely intentional and aware (Oliva 2002; Boatti 2007). Going beyond the ideologic approach promoted by the second rationalist plan (1976–1980), the 1984 structural plan overcome the preservation goal of the industrial production inside the Milan urban core (difficult to implement in a global de-industrialization phase of world cities) and the zoning. Through a still “milanocentric” approach, the Milan Municipality identified the priority axis for the development of the entire metropolitan area in the construction of the new suburban

⁷A group of rationalist architects as Albini, Bottoni, Gardella, Mucchi, Peressutti, Pucci, Rogers, Belgiojoso and Cerutti.

⁸Specifically, the National Urban Planning Act n°1150, approved in 1942.

⁹Today, the Centro Studi PIM is a voluntary association of local authorities placed in the Milan Metropolitan City and Monza-Brianza Province.

¹⁰Elaborated by Ludovico Belgiojoso, Giuseppe Ciribini, Demetrio Costantino, Giancarlo De Carlo, Domenico Rodella, Gian Luigi Sala, Bernardo Secchi, Silvano Tintori and Alessandro Tutino.

¹¹Elaborated by Marco Bacigalupo, Giacomo Corna Pellegrini and Giancarlo Mazzocchi.

¹²Developed after the institution of the Comprensori (promoted in 1975 by the Lombardy Regional Acts n°51 and 52).

railway tunnel,¹³ crossing the municipal area from the north-west of the city to the south-east, enabling the activation of a new suburban train network, and contributing to redirecting the urban change process of the urban core towards an urban region perspective. Along this new infrastructures, the 1984 structural plan promoted the transformation of big brownfields (the former gasometers in Bovisa, Fina refinery in Certosa, Alfa Romeo car plant in Portello, railyard in Porta Vittoria) and vacant spaces (the central area of Garibaldi-Repubblica) into new, accessible and mixed-use, metropolitan centralities.

Just a few years later, this approach was extended to other areas by the following Documento Direttore delle Aree Dismesse approved by the Milan Municipality in 1988: for instance, to the large Pirelli brownfield in the Bicocca area, that was the first big urban transformation project to be implemented, even though it was not included in the previous 1984 structural plan. It was on the background of these 1980s experimental structural plans that, in the 1990s, Milan made an important contribution to the innovation of the Italian urban planning system,¹⁴ based on the strategic negotiation approach: the experimentation of the so-called Programmi Complessi, such as the Programmi di Riqualficazione Urbana (PRU) and the Programmi Integrati di Intervento (PII), aimed at facing the decrease of public funding (by involving private actors in planning urban transformation projects), as well as the rigidity of general urban planning tools inspired by the expansion-oriented zoning approach (through partial, site-specific and mixed-use urban planning tools, more flexible and transformation-oriented).

The 1990s and 2000s phase of the post-Fordist Milan urban change based on a large use of this innovative planning tools. The 1995 PRUs planned and designed the transformation of big brownfields, such as the areas Pompeo Leoni (former OM truck plant), Rubattino (former Innocenti and Maserati scooter and car plant), and Quarto Oggiaro—Palizzi (former FINA refinery). Following, the 1999 PIIs planned and designed the transformation of other big brownfields, such as the areas of Rogoredo-Santa Giulia (former Montedison chemical plant), CityLife (historical Milan City Fairground), Portello (former Alfa Romeo car plant), Marelli—Adriano (former Marelli engineering industry), Manifattura Tabacchi (former tobacco industry) and Porta Vittoria (former railyard), as well vacant spaces (such as, the central Garibaldi—Repubblica area) (Morandi 2007).

In Milan (more than in other Italian cities), this experimental phase was more radical. Until the breakdown of the 2008 global crisis and, in particular, of the real estate market, the Milan Municipal Administration allowed an exceptional real estate redevelopment of industrial sites and vacant spaces by leading, at the same time, to high private returns and poor contribution to public benefits. Furthermore, several of these large urban projects (often designed by global architects¹⁵) have remained unfinished, because of high costs of land reclaiming and financial problems of private developers (Bolocan Goldstein and Bonfantini 2007; Pasqui 2018a). Without a clear

¹³Planned in 1982 and gradually opened to service since 1997.

¹⁴Originally based on the Italian National Act n°179, approved in 1992.

¹⁵Such as Stefano Boeri, Zaha Hadid, Arata Isozaki, Daniel Libeskind, Cesar Pelli.

intention and aware of innovating processes of urban planning and government, local policy-makers simply renounced to traditional procedures and approaches. They fostered the market through neoliberal political choices and, only implicitly, they experimented with innovative planning tools and metropolitan government, that is, by developing inspiring (but weak) “milanocentric” vision for the urban region.

This is the case of the Documento di Inquadramento Ricostruire la Grande Milano, approved by the Milan Municipality in 2000, updating the city image produced by the 1980s structural plans, and upscaling it at the territorial level. According to the ongoing PIIs, to the new urban regional infrastructural corridors and to the location of the three urban regional airports, this new structural plan synthesized the future development of the multi-scalar Milan with the famous image of the “inverted T”, through which the main urban change axes were emphasized (Bolocan Goldstein and Bonfantini 2007; Morandi 2007): from the North-West to the South-East axes, plus the North-East one, that correspond to the main railway and motorway corridors connecting Milan to other Italian and European cities and regions.

This is another example of a never solved and a never-ending conflict between the planning and government of the urban core and those of the urban region: from the innovative 1960s–1980s PIM proposals, to the experimental fulfilment of national and regional acts¹⁶ by the Milan Provincial administration. Because of the constitutive weakness of this institution, the three Milan provincial plans (the 1991 Piano Direttore Territoriale dell’Area Milanese, and the 2003 and 2014 Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Provinciale—PTCP) were not able to implement their polycentric vision for the Milan metropolitan area, that collided with strong centripetal urban dynamics towards the urban core. At the same time, also the new 2012 Milan urban plan, that was finally approved in conformity to the new regional urban planning act¹⁷ (after more than 30 years from the previous 1976–1980 general urban plan), counterposed a new “milanocentric” vision for the urban region, by highlighting the supremacy of the Milan urban core.

According to the same regional urban planning act, this (radically new) general and transformation-oriented urban planning tool was totally different in comparison with the previous zoning-based and expansion-oriented ones (approved in 1953 and in 1976–1980), thus obligating the city administration to experiment with both innovative urban planning system¹⁸ and procedures. Referring to the ongoing post-Fordist socio-economic and spatial metamorphosis, this 2012 Piano di Governo del Territorio (PGT), approved by the Milan City Council, introduced innovative goals,

¹⁶The reference is to the Italian National Act n°142 (1990) and the Lombardy Regional Act n°12 (2005), which provided the Province Administrations with powers and competences also in terms of urban planning (such as, town planning coordination, new infrastructures, environment protection, ecological networks).

¹⁷That is, the Lombardy Regional Act n°12 (2005).

¹⁸The former Piano Regolatore Generale (PRG) is substituted by the new Piano di Governo del Territorio (PGT) that, in turn, is made by three documents: the Documento di Piano (a sort of structural plan), the Piano dei Servizi (a sort of public city plan) and the Piano delle Regole (a sort of ordinary management and regulation plan).

issues and processes. According to the slogan of the “city as a common good”, it has been aiming at:

- promoting an inclusive and mixed-use city, even through innovative mechanisms and rules for public/private agreement in order to balance public and private building rights in every urban transformation;
- improving the quality of urban environment and social services through the preservation of the urban green belt, the exploitation of the agricultural production, the creation of an ecological network, the development and incentivization of a social housing program, the improvement of collective services and open spaces, the inclusion of innovative workplaces in the system of urban services (in order to facilitate their development), as well as the regeneration of both the historic areas and the rest of the built-up city;
- involving supra-municipal and sectoral institutions, local borough administrations and civil associations in the planning process through specific public meeting to discuss and share the planning choices (Arcidiacono and Pogliani 2011; Arcidiacono et al. 2018).

The 2011 political change in the city administration¹⁹ influenced the urban agenda and, through the 2012 PGT, enabled a post-crisis downsizing of the building rights. Even though this urban plan was based on the confirmation of already planned large urban transformations, it tried to contain the previous pro-growth approach (Pasqui 2018a). However, being this plan originally aimed at the redistribution of the added value in the real estate and on few new sectors (including leisure tourism), the substantial deregulation in terms of land-use, together with the absence of a shared vision for the development of the Milan urban core and the effects of the financial crisis, limited the capacity of the Milan Municipal Administration to take the lead in planning new transformations. Accordingly, these projects depended almost entirely on the private players of an increasingly unstable real estate market (Palermo and Ponzini 2012; Palermo and Ponzini 2014).

An extreme example of this approach can be identified in the 2012 PGT’s neglect of the big Expo 2015 projects.²⁰ While the breakdown of the 2008 global crisis affected the implementation of such oversized interventions, the World’s Fair 2015 was originally considered as an extraordinary event (to manage through extraordinary planning tools and governance), thus ignoring the permanent effects of its legacies (beginning with the problematic post-event reuse of the Expo site, originally considered as further occasion of real estate overproduction) (Di Vita and Morandi 2018). These are challenges for the contemporary Milan urban agenda, even though the multi-scalarity of such large projects demand for an unprecedented multi-level planning and governance.

¹⁹From a right and neoliberal administration (Mayor Letizia Moratti), to a left and democratic administration (Mayor Giuliano Pisapia).

²⁰Projects proposed during the event bid (2006–2007) and implemented after the event awarding (2008–2015), according to a specific *Accordo di Programma* (started in October 2008 and approved in July 2011), which both the Expo site and its post-event transformation in the new Milan Innovation District (MIND) refer to.

13.4 The Post-crisis Milan: Experimenting with New Urban Planning Issues and Multi-level Governance

In the current post-crisis phase, that in Milan corresponds also to a post-Expo phase, several indicators show that the urban core (in particular) and its region (in part) are involved in a renaissance trend, that contrasts with the long-standing economic stagnation of the whole country (Camera di Commercio di Milano 2016; Assolombarda 2018). In this phase, the current left-wing city administration (2016–present)²¹ is developing a new urban plan, that is trying to interpret the current and trans-scalar urban dynamics in partial continuity with the 2012 PGT (still in force); that is, to emphasize the discontinuity produced by the first left-wing city administration (2011–2016) in comparison with the previous right-wing ones (1993–2011).

For what concerns the large urban transformations, the Milan Municipality is promoting an innovative vision (called Milan 2030), that could overcome the fragmentation of the past urban plans and projects. Indeed, it is focusing all the main interventions around the reuse of the former barracks and railyards, also in connection with the proposal for a new circle railway line, that should take advantage from the existing city railway belt. In parallel, after the recent investments in the exploitation of the tourist resources of the Milan urban core (i.e. the historical centre and the new centralities), and in the improvement of its international attractiveness and image (also accelerated by the Expo 2015), this new PGT aims at rebalancing the urban development trends, for instance by focusing on environmental and social problems of its outskirts. Accordingly, the main (and sometimes experimental) goals and issues of this new urban plan are:

- not only, the development of the Milan urban core as a node of global networks, where places and people are connected, also by improving the functional and building density in areas which are close to the metro and railway stations;
- but also, the renewal of the urban core as an attractive and inclusive city, by selecting areas to locate strategic urban functions (such as, innovative services, new economic activities, social housing, renovated public spaces), beginning with the reuse of former industrial areas;
- at the same time, the regeneration of the urban core as a green and resilient city, by limiting the land take and incentivizing the improvement in the energy performances of the built-up city, as well as by creating new ecological corridors (from a new connection between the Parco Nord and the Parco Sud, to a linear green system along the railway belt and across its railyards);
- finally, the spread of the regeneration processes inside all the 88 neighbourhoods of the urban core, by taking advantages of the reuse of the former barracks and railyards, the reopening of the historical Navigli canal systems and the renewal of squares along the main public transport corridors; or by promoting self-recovering projects of abandoned buildings and self-restructuring processes of social housing neighbourhoods, with specific attention to the urban peripheries.

²¹Mayor Giuseppe Sala, former CEO of the Expo 2015 Spa management company.

These goals and issues confirm (and simply upgrade) goals and issues which have been already promoted by the 2012 PGT. However, even as reaction to the previous real estate driven development, they specifically focus (sometimes rhetorically, but sometimes innovatively) on the urban outskirts. On the background of the Italian Government's Piano Periferie, that in 2016 established extraordinary funds for the urban peripheries at the national level, the current Milan Municipal Administration has launched a specific Piano Quartieri. This specific plan has been developed also on the basis of an unprecedented participation process (despite some difficulties in the coordination with the upcoming new general urban plan) and includes projects for 1.6 billion € in 40 city neighbourhoods (even though their effects are not tangible, yet).

Referring to the same extraordinary national funds and to a similar participative approach, also the new Milan Metropolitan City²² has been working on the territorial fragilities of its outskirts, and it has been doing it at its wider metropolitan scale. The project "Metropolitan welfare and urban regeneration" is trying to combine the redevelopment of degraded, abandoned or isolated places (located in clusters of municipalities surrounding the Milan urban core) with the social housing inclusion and cultural promotion of citizens. Unfortunately, with the exception of this interesting territorial scale project, the metropolitan planning and government system is still vague. The constitutive weakness of the new Metropolitan institution is even worse than that of the former Province: not only because its borders, which are no more adequate to larger boundaries of the actual Milan urban region, have not changed, but also because its economic resources and its political powers and responsibilities are smaller than those of other institutions such as regions or municipalities (Fedeli 2016; Pasqui 2018a, b).

According to the green, blue and grey networks which it mainly relies on, the new PGT promoted by the Milan Municipal Administration (and still under development) proposes a new territorial vision that works also at the broad scale of the Milan metropolitan area, as well as at that of the wider urban region. On the contrary, the Piano Strategico Metropolitanano 2016–2018, promoted by the new Milan Metropolitan City, has been mainly ignored, also because it was developed just as a collection

²²This new institution, that was established by the National Act n° 56 (2014), substituted the Provincial Administration of important Italian cities such as Bologna, Florence, Genoa, Milan, Naples, Reggio Calabria, Rome, Turin and Venice.

of already existing generic and easy to share themes²³ and local projects.²⁴ It has been neither able to match the high quality of the participative approach engaged by the experimental Progetto Strategico Città di Città, started in 2007 by the Milan Province Administration (in collaboration with the Politecnico di Milano), and aimed at promoting local projectualities and at enhancing multiple forms of urban habitability (Balducci et al. 2011). At the same time, the new Piano Territoriale Metropolitan, that should be the Milan Metropolitan City's planning tool able to promote specific projects and actions of inter-municipal cooperation (Pasqui 2018a), has not been elaborated yet.

It is against the backdrop of the lack of both a shared metropolitan vision and a recognizable metropolitan government that relevant projects, sometimes potentially connected, are still fragmented, and weakened by risks of mutual overlapping and competition of functions (Armondi and Di Vita 2018): from the post-event reuse of the Expo site between Milan and Rho (close to the new Fairground, on the way to the Malpensa international airport), to the transformation of the big brownfield of the former Falck steel plant in Sesto San Giovanni (between Milan and Monza), and the consequent relocation and reconfiguration of the historical Città Studi university campuses and hospital facilities, inside the Milan municipal area.

It is hard to plan and govern such a fragmented and complex space, as that of the multi-scalar Milan, by taking into account the official authorities only: from the Milan Municipality to the Milan Metropolitan City; from the Lombardy Region to the Italian State. On the contrary, an essential resource is (implicitly but traditionally) made by the broadened city governance, that involve universities, multi-utility companies, firms, foundations, associations, and other public and private stakeholders able to produce new narratives on the city (Pasqui 2018a, b).

At different level and at multiple spatial scales, the ongoing socio-economic metamorphosis towards the knowledge and creative economy and society, that is deeply rooted in the manufacturing background of the multi-scalar Milan, has been occurring both in some districts of the urban core and in some sectors of the urban region: in particular, along the North-East axis (connecting Milan to Monza, Lecco and the Brianza area) and the North-West one (linking Milan to Como, Varese and the Malpensa International Airport) (Armondi et al. 2019). This metamorphosis has been involving several actors:

²³ Agile and efficient (open data, digital platform, online services, public administration reorganization); creative and innovative (university and research for productive innovation (fashion, design, media, chemical, pharmaceutical, mechanical), new technologies, sharing economy and society, incubators, start-ups, co-working spaces, fab-labs, post-Expo); attractive and world-oriented (city-gateway, city branding/marketing, airport system, quality of services); smart and sustainable (urban agriculture, urban food policy, metropolitan parks, Idroscalo, Parco Sud, Navigli, green and blue infrastructures, urban regeneration, energy efficiency, optic fibre); fast and connected (transport intermodality, integrated logistics, cycle network, vehicle sharing); cohesive and cooperative (associated management of services, social inclusion, social and temporary housing).

²⁴For instance, concerning brownfield transformation, transport hub improvement, riverbank and canal renewal, existing territorial park enlargement; new territorial park and agricultural district development; green infrastructure implementation; urban district regeneration.

- the Milan Trade Fair, that has become one of the main real estate promoters (with the new exhibition venue and convention centre within the former Alfa Romeo industrial plant at the Portello, the new exhibition venue within the former Agip refinery in Rho, and the tertiary and residential CityLife redevelopment in the historical city fairground);
- the universities, that have become one of the main drivers of urban change processes and projects (with the new Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca in the former Pirelli factory, the new Politecnico di Milano campus in the former Bovisa gasometers and industrial buildings, the new Università Bocconi campus in the former milk factory at Porta Lodovica, and the planned Università degli Studi di Milano campus in the former Expo site), as well as strategic suppliers of innovative services for both students and other urban populations, and relevant promoters of innovative entrepreneurial activities;
- similarly, the hospitals and connected research centres (with the new Ospedale Galeazzi venue and the new Human Technopole research centre²⁵ on predictive medicine in the former Expo site, or the relocation of the Besta and the Istituto dei Tumori in the future City of Health that is planned in the former Falck industrial area in Sesto San Giovanni);
- the cultural institutions, that have become both important drivers of socio-economic and spatial regeneration through the reuse of abandoned buildings or vacant spaces (from the Hangar Bicocca and Teatro degli Arcimboldi in the Bicocca redevelopment area, to the new Fondazione Feltrinelli venue at Porta Volta, the new Fondazione Prada venue at Porta Romana, and the new Silos Armani and Museo delle Culture—MUDEC at Porta Genova), and supporters or providers of new forms of welfare (such as, the Fondazione Cariplo, its connected Fondazione Housing Sociale and the Caritas Ambrosiana, besides other several Third Sector organizations);
- besides the institutional role of the Milan Chamber of Commerce, the contributions made by several associations (for instance, the Assolombarda industrial association, that elaborated its own strategic plan for the Milan urban region,²⁶ as well as the Nexpo concept to promote the reuse of the Expo site by hosting innovative and technological firms);
- the investments of both multinational firms (i.e. Deutsche Bank and Siemens in the Bicocca redevelopment area; Amazon, Axa, BNP Paribas, Coima, Google, HSBC, LinkedIn, Microsoft, Samsung, Unicredit and Unipolsai in and around the Porta Nuova transformation area; Generali in the CityLife conversion area; ABB, Bayer, Bosch, Celgene, Galxo, IBM and Novartis in the Milan Innovation District—MIND redevelopment project in the former Expo site, partially inspired by the

²⁵That is, a new research centre promoted by the Italian National Government and coordinated by the Italian Institute of Technology (IIT) in cooperation with Politecnico di Milano, Università degli Studi di Milano and Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca.

²⁶Called “50 progetti per rilanciare il territorio. Far volare Milano per far volare l’Italia” (website: <https://www.assolombarda.it/chi-siamo/le-assemblee/assemblea-generale-assolombarda-confindustria-milano-monza-e-brianza-2016/documentazione/il-piano-strategico-50-progetti-per-rilanciare-le-impres-e-il-territorio>).

Nexpo concept promoted by Assolombarda) and local public/private companies and utilities (i.e. A2A for technological networks; AMSA for waste collection; ATM for public transport; FNM and FS for regional and national railways; SEA for city airports).

Also, the Milan Expo 2015 and post-Expo are expression of a traditionally implicit urban agenda that, when the candidature was proposed before the breaking out of the global crisis, was mainly driven by the real estate market. Despite its traditional lack of a clear and long-term strategic vision, Milan was able to face the World's Fair by experimenting with innovative projects.

Against the backdrop of the official event success and post-event difficulties in the exhibition site reuse, the Expo 2015 represented an occasion for the experimental coordination and empowerment of a new multi-level governance, potentially able to overcome the administrative boundaries between the Milan urban core and its urban region. The rigid event deadlines played a positive role to stimulate this unprecedented collaboration, even though this convergence of multiple actors was not planned or intentional, but it happened spontaneously. While the Expo projects for the exhibition venues and infrastructures, as well as the post-Expo redevelopment plan for the reuse of the former exposition area have been promoted according to a specific and just-in-time vision, the event and post-event have been an occasion for the cooperation between a huge variety of actors (Di Vita 2017; Di Vita and Morandi 2018):

- within the Expo 2015 Spa company (in charge of the event planning and management), that was established in 2008 by the Milan Municipal Administration, the Milan Provincial Administration, the Milan Chamber of Commerce, the Lombardy Regional Government and the Italian National Government;
- within the Arexpo Spa company (in charge of the post-event planning and management), that was established in 2011 by the Milan and Rho Municipal Administrations, the Milan Metropolitan City, the Milan Trade Fair Foundation and the Lombardy Regional Government, and integrated in 2016 by the Italian National Government;
- within the several collateral initiatives to the main event and post-event projects (which have made a relevant contribution to the event success and, hopefully, to the post-event one), which involved public companies (Infrastrutture Lombarde, Metropolitana Milanese), universities and research centres (Politecnico di Milano, Università degli Studi di Milano, Università degli Studi di Milano Bicocca, Istituto Italiano di Tecnologia), foundations (Fondazione Cariplo, Fondazione Feltrinelli, Fondazione La Triennale, Fondazione Mondadori, Fondazione Piccolo Teatro, Fondazione Triulza), associations (Assolombarda, Confcommercio, Confindustria, Unione del Commercio, Unioncamere Lombardia) and private companies (Gruppo Ospedaliero San Donato, Lendlease).

On the background of both its successes and problems, the City Operations Master Programme (specifically approved by the Milan City Council in 2012 in order to match the event and the city) launched the ExpoinCittà, that was a pioneering

initiative in the long history of the worldwide exhibitions coordinated by the Bureau International des Expositions (BIE). Inspired by the Milan Fuorisalone event,²⁷ the ExpoinCittà (promoted in 2014 by the Milan Municipal Administration and the Milan Chamber of Commerce) aimed at coordinating and supporting existing and new cultural, commercial and sport initiatives promoted by multiple stakeholders in order to exploit tourist potentialities of the urban core and region. The bottom-up collection of the collateral event spaces and initiatives throughout the city, and the development of the collateral event program, was supported by an innovative e-participation digital platform,²⁸ that aimed at broadening the Expo inclusion. In parallel, a second pioneering initiative promoted by Expo 2015 Spa (in collaboration with the Milan Chamber of Commerce, the Assolombarda industrial association and the Confcommercio retail association) is that of the E015 Digital Ecosystem,²⁹ aimed at providing the interoperability between different applications. This ecosystem exploited the ICT potentialities to match several traditional and digital services which are provided to different typologies of citizens and visitors by multiple public and private actors of the urban core and region.

Both the ExpoinCittà and the E015 Digital Ecosystem, which are unprecedented in previous mega-events, contribute to the reflection about the ICT potentials to overcome the barriers of the administrative fragmentation that has frequently affected the metropolitan planning and government, as well as to experiment with new forms of multi-scalar governance that need to be investigated more in depth (Di Vita et al. 2017).

Since the election of the 2011 City Council, also the Milan Municipal Administration has been investing in technological innovation, economic development and social inclusion. For instance, in the frame of the Milan smart (and sharing) city policies,³⁰ it has been promoting different kinds of projects and plans to highlight the role of ICTs as drivers of urban change; that is, to incentivize sustainable mobility, as well as to support and subsidize bottom-up innovative socio-economic initiatives (i.e. co-working spaces, makerspaces and other kind of hybrid workplaces). These initiatives, which are potentially able to strengthen ongoing urban regeneration processes, are very frequent because of the traditionally important role of private actors (profit and non-profit, from economic operators, to industrial, cultural and social associations) and higher education institutions in setting the Milan urban agenda and in implementing the related projects, in parallel to local authorities (Armondi and Bruzzese 2017; Mariotti et al. 2017; Pacchi 2018).

Basing on a mix of public and private investments, the Milan Municipality's approach to smartness experimentally aims at combining new technologies with economic development and social inclusion, infrastructures and human capital, innovation and training, as well as research and participation. Therefore, it aims at focusing not only on ICTs potentials, but also on socio-economic fragilities and vulnerabili-

²⁷Website: <https://fuorisalone.it/welcome/>.

²⁸Website: www.expoincitta.com.

²⁹Website: www.e015.regione.lombardia.it.

³⁰Website: <http://www.milanosmartcity.org>.

ties, in order to increase equality and reduce discriminations (Armondi et al. 2019). In particular, besides art and culture, tourism and urban agriculture, the Milan City Council is promoting policies aimed at supporting new entrepreneurial activities (digital and green, service-oriented and manufacturing, artisanal and international) but, without forgetting their risks of polarization, is trying to match them with other policies aimed at fostering social inclusion and sustainable urban environment (De Biase 2019). This has been a relevant shift from a traditional pro-growth development model, mainly aimed at a real estate overproduction, to a new mixed development pattern (Pasqui 2018a).

According to the frequent connections between these growing policies of innovation and inclusion, and the reuse (also temporary) of small abandoned buildings and vacant spaces, the case of Milan (before than other Italian cities, but similarly to other world cities) demonstrates the crisis effects on long-term processes of urban change and on consolidated (even if implicit) urban agendas (previously based on large transformation projects, rather than on spread and molecular regeneration processes). However, despite the potential outcomes of this innovative trend and the strong narration on this new phenomenon (promoted by both the policy-makers and the media), this is still made by marginal and niche episodes, and it has not been possible, yet, to assess its real socio-economic and spatial effects and risks: neither at the neighbourhood scale, nor at the urban one.

These innovative and inclusive policies are still sectoral,³¹ external to the local urban planning system, while their mutual relationships could be much more fertile to better combine the socio-economic and spatial dimensions of urban regeneration processes (De Boyser et al. 2016). At the same time, these innovative and inclusive policies are still promoted at the only municipal level of the central city, while their extension (at least) at the scale of the Metropolitan City could contribute to overcome the limits of obsolete municipal borders and competences; that is, to better deal with the growing duality between centralities and peripheries (Secchi 2013; Ranci and Cucca 2017; Pasqui 2018a).

13.5 The Big Absence and the Impellent Challenge: Planning, Governing and Making the Urban Region and the City-Region

The multi-scalar Milan highlights new trends in the contemporary urban metamorphosis process. After the post-Fordist phase, when the knowledge and creative economy was instrumental to the development of large real estate projects, the current post-crisis phase translates itself into long-term urban regeneration processes, also connected to the growth of the sharing economy and society. With different intensity and success, the Milan Municipal Administration has been able to foster the grow-

³¹Specifically, promoted by the Direzione di Progetto Innovazione Economica e Sostegno all'Impresa of the Milan Municipality.

ing attractiveness of the city at both the international and local levels: not only for investors and tourists (i.e. through Expo 2015, other large redevelopment projects and new infrastructures), but also for citizens (i.e. through smart city and outskirts policies) (Pasqui 2018a, b). Nevertheless, despite the weak efforts promoted by the new Milan Metropolitan City, this dynamic urban region is affected by the lack of a wide and shared strategic vision, as well as institutional tools able to deal with a polyarchic governance. And this absence leads to negative effects in terms of coordination between different-level policies: from municipal to metropolitan; from regional to national (Armondi et al. 2019).

On the one hand, “a new metropolitan agenda (...) should be based on a policy of cooperation, able to produce projects through agreements, and select initiatives and programs based on criteria of efficiency and effectiveness” (Pasqui 2018a, 141). The case of Milan highlights that the administrative borders of the new Metropolitan City, which are smaller than the real urban region, weaken its planning and government activities. While contemporary urban spaces, networks and dynamics call for updated tools of planning and systems of governance (Rydin 2013; Knieling and Othengrafen 2016), and the overtake of traditional levels of public authorities becomes necessary (Dierwechter 2017), wide urban regions are more and more crucial in their duality which connects the international and the sub-national (Taylor 2013; Herrschel and Newman 2017).

On the other hand, the spread of new technologies, and the resulting digitalization and hybridization of production, consumption and accessibility of goods, services and places, drives trans-scalar urban processes, and affects meaning, organization and regeneration of multi-scalar spaces: from neighbourhoods to city-regions. In the context of such a disruptive technological, economic and spatial change, multi-level urban policy should consider how new technologies affect manufacturing and commercial activities, service and mobility supply, place quality and social equity. That is, how new technologies affect the contemporary urban environment, and with which implications (criticalities and potentialities) in terms of multi-level planning and governance: not only in terms of contents, but also in terms of approaches (Kellerman 2019).

On the background of a scalar transition from urban to urban–regional space, and a digital transition in economy and society, it is challenging to deal with the planning and governance transitions in innovative urban–regional agendas, and with the decision-making transition from “elite managerialism” to participatory collaboration (Herrschel and Dierwechter 2018).³² At the same time, the participatory place-making approach could be extended from the neighbourhood and city scale of planning, where it has been developed over the last decade, to the urban–regional level, by exploring the possibilities to relate multi-level planning and governance through a sharing region-making practice (Di Marino and Di Vita 2019).

³²This statement also synthesizes findings of the Regional Studies Association (RSA) temporary research network on “Smart City-Regional Governance for Sustainability” (<https://www.regionalstudies.org/networks/smart-city-regional-governance-for-sustainability/>), whose edited book is now under development.

This could be a challenge also for the Milan urban region, where the lack of a wide and shared strategic vision, as well of institutional tools able to deal with a polyarchic governance, exacerbates the functional competition and affects the coordination between different projects and functions. This scenario could also stress the multi-scalar dimension of the city by involving other components of the wide Northern Italy urban platform: from (at least) its neighbouring cities, such as Genoa and Turin, to the SME urban–regional platforms of Emilia Romagna and Veneto (Armondi et al. 2019). In a prolonged phase of international and national crisis, the North Italy city-region is still resilient: in particular, the so-called new industrial triangle that excludes Genoa and Turin,³³ but extends from Milan to Bologna (in Emilia Romagna) and Treviso (in Veneto) (Di Vico 2019). This is a heterogeneous city-region, that is formed by:

- on the one side, the consolidation of the Milan urban core and region as an international innovative hub according to its advanced services, exchange activities, specialized manufacturing and growing tourism;
- on the other side, the evolution of spread productive systems (from artisanal industrial districts, to sophisticated international productive chains), together with the specialization of firms (from SMEs to innovative laboratories) and medium-sized cities (i.e. Modena in automotive and industrial design, Parma in agro-food and culture, Piacenza in logistics, Rimini in leisure, Trieste in port activities) along the two main infrastructural corridors and macro-regional linear cities of the A4 motorway (Milan–Venice–Trieste) and the Via Emilia (Milan–Bologna–Rimini) (Garavaglia 2019).

Within this polycentric urban network, the borders between innovation and decline, or between specialized cities and their manufacturing background risk to increase, because it is the product of spontaneous process (historically rooted and market driven—Garavaglia 2019), neither supported by multi-scalar urban policies, nor multi-level economic and infrastructural policies (Balducci et al. 2018; D’Albergo et al. 2019). Therefore, the strategic scenarios for the Milan urban region and the North Italy city-region could foster the consolidation of this urban network: they could lead the Milan innovative ecosystem to reach a material and intangible dimension that could be compared to those of its international competitors (beginning with the *Ranstadt Holland* urban platform, i.e. on the occasion of the recent competition for the post-Brexit relocation of the European Medicine Agency) (De Biase 2019). In the 1980s, the 1984 structural plan led to a first change of scale in the Milan urban core perception, according to the project for the new suburban railway system. In the 2000s and 2010s, the new high-speed railway system has been strengthening the connections among the Milan urban region and other important urban poles of the North Italy city-region³⁴ (Rolando 2018). In the 2020s, these connections could

³³That is, together with Milan, the vertexes of the twentieth century industrial triangle.

³⁴The new high-speed railway lines Milan–Turin (partially opened in 2006 and completed in 2009), Milan–Bologna (opened in 2008), and Milan–Brescia (opened in 2016).

be better exploited, if they would be supported by a wide and shared strategic vision, able to converge a multi-level planning and governance.

Besides the Expo 2015 and post-Expo experimental innovations, outcomes and legacies,³⁵ Milan has been making another contribution to the debate about mega-event planning and governance. Nevertheless, it has been making it within the usual Italian political conflicts, and without an explicit and shared territorial scenario. On the occasion of the ongoing bid to the 2026 Winter Olympics, the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI) has been trying to experiment with an innovative macro-regional candidature: from Milan and the Lombardy Alps, to Cortina d'Ampezzo and the Dolomiti. Despite its risks in terms of planning and governance, this candidature could be challenging and timely for both the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the enrolled cities and regions.

In order to avoid the recurrent problems concerning the development of large event facilities and infrastructures, and their post-event reuse (that also the successful case of the Milan Expo 2015 has shown), the current Milan-Cortina bid to the 2026 Winter Olympics could be taken as an occasion to experiment with a new approach. In order to improve their sustainability, the planning and management of mega-event legacies could become the priority over the event itself. Therefore, the mega-event process could be no more promoted on the background of an implicit territorial agenda, that cannot avoid their negative impacts (i.e. the festivalization of the involved urban places, the marginalization of the excluded areas and populations). On the contrary, the coordination between a trans-scalar event and (often missing) multi-scalar (urban) policy, related planning and governance (i.e. municipal, metropolitan, urban–regional, city-regional), could lead to improve and broaden the event effects and legacies in space and time (Di Vita and Morandi 2018).

The governance experimentations and spatial innovations provided by the Expo 2015 collateral initiatives³⁶ through the exploitation of digital technologies, and cultural and environmental resources could be one of the goals and issues for this new kind of territorial agenda, that should deal with both the phenomena of growing attractiveness of the city (to consolidate) and raising processes of poor metropolitanization (to mitigate and invert) (Pasqui 2018a, b). Therefore, the (originally unplanned and unprecedented) Expo 2015 experimentations and innovations could be mixed to the Piano Quartieri that the Milan Municipality is promoting (even by taking advantage of minor events to activate social regeneration processes). At the same time, they could be applied to the macro-regional Milan-Cortina bid to the 2026 Winter Olympics, as well as to future worldwide BIE exhibitions.

³⁵See Paragraph 4.

³⁶See Paragraph 4.

13.6 Conclusion

The multi-scalarity of Milan (from the urban core to the metropolitan area; from the urban region to the city-region), as well as the transcalarity of its socio-economic and spatial dynamics make it similar to other world cities. These multiple dimensions make it an interesting case study, when talking about increasingly blurred administrative borders. As socio-economic and spatial dynamics transverse boundaries, local authorities (i.e. municipal, metropolitan or regional, solely from an administrative point of view) can lead to limited effects on urban change processes (Armondi and Di Vita 2018). Therefore, one of the main challenges for its future policy, related planning and governance could be the strengthening of both necessary sensitivity to and permanent activation of local and supra-local relations; that is, the overtaking of usual scales, which local and national authorities refer to, but which contemporary urban phenomena usually overcome (Brenner 2014; Soja 2011).

Notwithstanding the recent financial crisis and austerity measures, this chapter shows how the traditionally polyarchic local governance of the multi-scalar Milan has always been and still remains one of the key drivers of urban change and innovation, as well as the main player of a (usually) implicit urban agenda. This could be the local resource to exploit towards the development of a (increasingly necessary) long-time and wide-shared scenario, able to inspire and coordinate multi-level planning issues and tools. In this perspective, and in order to avoid the risk of a rhetorical goal, that in Milan and Italy has always been difficult to develop and implement (Pasqui et al. 2017; Balducci et al. 2018), the Milan-Cortina bid to the 2026 Winter Olympics could be a chance.

Despite the well-known threats of mega-events (i.e. the intensification of socio-economic and spatial conflicts and disproportions), in general terms the Milan-Cortina candidature could be challenging in relation to a potentially experimental redirection of the extraordinary dimension of mega-events towards the ordinary dimension of regional-sized contemporary urban phenomena (Di Vita and Morandi 2018), that could lead to an innovation of the (more and more unsustainable) event approach, useful for both other candidate cities and event international organizations.³⁷ Furthermore, at the local level the unprecedented macro-regional scale of this proposal could foster the consolidation of a (more and more necessary) explicit territorial agenda for the multi-scalar Milan, aiming at both strengthening the growing attractiveness of the city and rebalancing the raising duality between centralities and peripheries.

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³⁷Such as the IOC and the BIE.

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Conclusion. Understanding Urban Agendas Starting from Emergent Practices: Towards an Experimental Framework

Sonia De Gregorio Hurtado and Simonetta Armondi

Abstract This chapter reviews the different contributions around the urban agenda-setting gathered in this book. The intention is to set a departing point to shed light on how this policy processes relate to precedent and emerging policies and priorities in order to advance in a framework for their understanding. The observation of the different cases confirms our initial hypothesis: The growing relevance of the urban issue in decision-making has its roots in the structural changes that took place in the 1970s and the 1980s. From then, the urban agenda-setting has increased its complexity and has become highly intersectoral and strategic, being crossed and determined by other policy priorities in the context of multi-scalargovernance frameworks in which it looks for coherence and legitimization. The review identifies a range of topics and approaches for the continuation of the analysis of urban agendas in a scene in which these policy processes will be gaining relevance.

Keywords Urban agenda • Agenda-setting • Europe • Evolution of urban global policy

The emergent relevance of the urban issue in decision-making has been clearly embedded during the last decade in policy agendas and particularly in the urban agenda-setting of national, regional, and local governments. Along this period, and particularly from 2016 to 2017, when several governance, socio-economic, and environmental-related factors converged in an international consensus on the importance of “cities” (Barnett and Parnell 2016) and resulted in the launch of the Urban Agenda for the European Union—EU—(2016), the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development (2015), and the New Urban Agenda (2016) of the United Nations, a growing number of governments started or fostered a process of definition of their urban strategies. In doing this, many have been influenced by the

supranational agendas mentioned, while others have evolved existing schemes or have identified the necessity of giving place to a process of definition of a framework to advance towards a specific urban future (according to their own-interest or resulting from internal tensions) aligned with other policy priorities. This book is rooted in the evolution of global policy on urban and regional issues over the last decades (Parnell 2016) and has its origin in the acknowledgement of the increasing attention that governments (and other actors) from all over the world are paying to design and put into place this kind of policy processes that have “the urban” as specific policy subject. The objective is giving place to a reflection, specifically set in the European scene, aimed to advance towards the definition of a framework from which the phenomena at the basis of this policy issue can be understood and analysed in the following years, when (hopefully) some of the urban agendas that are being defined at the moment will get consolidated and attention will focus on their implementation and results. As a consequence, the book aims to give momentum to the study of urban agendas, understood as a policy process, but also as a set of policy priorities that are privileged over others and, consequently, need to construct a “legitimization narrative” in which strategical alliances and the role of the different stakeholders emerge as crucial.

As mentioned in the introduction, the book adopts a multi-level governance vision, trying to gather experiences of agenda-setting aimed to map the different geographies of urban agendas, to identify interrelations, interdependence, alignments, tensions, and contradictions, and to give place to a framework that shed light on the agendagovernance narrative, as we argue that these instruments need to be born in a framework of at least “apparent multi-level consensus” aimed to coordinate the action of different government levels. As a result, the book addresses the agenda process developed by international bodies (the EU), national governments (Finland, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the UK), regional governments (Andalusia, Denmark, Germany, Scotland), and metropolitan bodies (France, the UK). The book also includes two chapters that analyse the evolution of the urban agenda-setting at the local level (Milan and Madrid) with the objective of giving place to a comprehensive picture in which the local and its growing relevance are represented in their uniqueness.

The chapters developed along the different parts confirm the implicit hypothesis that was at the basis of the origin of this book: The EU, the national and regional governments, and even metropolitan regions are developing a policy vision and style that are privileging strategies aimed to exert an influence on their urban areas in order to enhance their economic and governance processes, give adaptive replies to social transformation, and foster the necessary reverse of the environmental decline of cities as well as their overall environmental impact. In some cases, they also pay attention to the role that medium and small cities play with regard to rural areas. This policy trend is not new. We argue that it should be considered as the continuation of a path that started to be explored in the 1980s, a decade in which the pioneering countries launched their national policy frameworks for cities and the European Economic Community (EEC) started to look at cities as policy subjects (De Gregorio Hurtado 2012). Also in the 1990s, following the recommendations of

the Rio Summit of United Nations of 1992 and the Aalborg Charter of 1994, many cities gave place to their Local Agendas 21 to implement the concept of sustainable urban development in urban policy-making. If at that moment globalization was one of the main drivers resulting in the policy attention to cities because of its negative effects on them and the relevant opportunities that it entailed, in the present the growing intention to govern the urban is fostered by the scale and urgency of those “evolved” and new global (or EU) challenges. Their effects get territorialized in cities at high speed and are characterized by the transboundary and complex nature of the transformations that cause them. The analyses undertaken along the book reflect how institutions try to cope with this challenging and changing scene, showing that the agenda process and content are importantly determined by the economic policy dimension over others, becoming frequently a set of government intentions to foster the growth and competitiveness potential of urban areas more than any other asset. Interestingly, in many cases, the agenda emerges as a new and potentially inspiring instrument, under social visions such as the spatial justice. The challenges identified along the different contexts investigated reveal that, together with the economic issue, other dimensions receive policy attention and are introduced in the agenda: Rescaling, the growing mismatch between administrative boundaries and functional areas and the metropolitan nature of urban dynamics, the housing issue, urban poverty and urban segregation, ageing, the re-industrialization of Europe, the transformation of the existing city under urban regeneration schemes, and environmental issues (with a specific attention to climate change), among others. Frequently, the attention to these issues loses momentum along the policy process when it is necessary to privilege economic objectives, particularly in an era in which economic multifaceted austerity in policy-making has characterized the EU framework and national policies, both concentrating and rescaling negative effects on urban spaces, lagging territories, and their populations (Adisson and Artioli 2019; Armondi 2017). The governance framework, defined within the institutional architecture in which the different government tiers exert their competences on the urban, emerges as another factor able to determine importantly the process and content of the agendas.

Beyond the growing relevance of “the city” as a policy issue, the review undertaken allows also identifying different reasons that explain the increasing importance of the agenda-setting. Some are the following: (i) the effects of the economic crisis along with those of the austerity and cutbacks that have affected urban areas negatively; (ii) the increasing governance complexity and procedural obstacles that supra-local governments find to define and implement urban visions through statutory planning, as well as tensions among government levels with regard “the urban”; (iii) local governments defining soft strategic frameworks, looking for ways of developing new forms of urbanisms to outline their urban future and abandoning the development of traditional statutory urban planning instruments; (iv) the growing capacity of cities to determine their own future by

creating alliances and trans-local networks with other cities, and to lobby together to impact policy-making at any governance scale. As a representative example, in March 2019, EU cities (and regions) have launched the Bucarest Declaration (Committee of the Regions 2019), as a “call to rebuild Europe from the ground up” and aiming to be a contribution to the work on the Strategic Agenda 2019–2024.¹ Arguing that “the EU needs its regions and cities just as much as they need the EU”. The capacity of cities and urban regions to network in order to increase their visibility and to “force” the delivery of solutions identifies them as actors with an increasing capacity to determine the upper level of governments’ agendas. Their empowerment reveals also that big cities could be advancing in the future to a greater independence with respect to upper levels of government in the definition of their own priorities and pathways.

The analysis undertaken reveals that urban agendas, despite their mostly soft and strategic nature, emerge as highly determined by path dependence at different levels. While they aim to be perceived as a drive for change, to give place to relevant reforms (in terms of governance and content), they emerge as hyper-determined by the institutional architecture, policy tradition, and inertias that characterize their contexts. Particularly, the national framework plays a crucial role in “filtering” supranational agendas and the perception that regional, and particularly the local governments of small and medium cities and other stakeholders have about them. The emergent practices reviewed by the book show also the low level of innovative intention in the majority of the agendas—according to Albrechts (2005) in terms of inertia of policy (and sometimes planning) processes and contents as creative responses to the problems and challenges they face—something that needs to be confirmed according to the review of more cases in the future, and that could be limiting the transformative capacity of these tools.

As the book shows, urban agendas at this stage of the XXI century are shaped as highly heterogeneous tools. The concept of urban agenda is not explicitly expressed in all the cases analysed. In any case, it emerges as being formalized and understood as an “umbrella concept” that embeds a myriad of specific policy approaches to the socio-economic, cultural, and environmental evolution of urban areas and the multi-level urban governance in which these are rooted. The concept (and policy instrument associated) is able to be “dwelled” by different theoretical traditions as well as discourses, ideologies, representations, and understandings of “the city”. It is also able to hide relevant urban topics, leaving them out from the definition of the policy problem. At the same time, it fosters specific stakeholders’ alliances and assemblages to frame or re-frame their power with regard to urban issues, giving less access to the policy process to other actors. Because of this, it should not be understood as a neutral concept and/or instrument, even in the cases in which it is framed and highly determined by supranational agendas (e.g. many local and regional agendas are being developed arguing that their reference is the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the New Urban Agenda of the United

¹<https://cor.europa.eu/en/summit2019>.

Nations). Under an apparently “shared” and aligned interest and the adoption of a supranational policy discourse that legitimizes its process and content, this concept and its transfer to policy-making implementation emerges in the present as an indicator of a complex and relevant policy trend that will be continuing its development as the importance of the urban continues growing along the following decade. All the elements and policy issues mentioned set an initial framework for the study of existing and developing urban agendas. This book is proposed as a departing point for the experimental interpretation and understanding of the complex phenomena at their basis, their policy assumptions, and implications from a critical approach.

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