

GOVERNANCE IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT CRISIS SITUATIONS

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Summary Urban shrinking processes are increasingly recognized as a phenomenon for research in urban politics, encompassing entire cities or parts of it as well as metropolitan areas that are experiencing a fundamental decline in both their economic and social bases. Cities are facing complex social problems like aging processes within the resident population and simultaneously running shrinking processes. Observable side effects of these transformation processes are higher vacancy rates and under-utilization of infrastructure facilities. Therefore cities are no longer able to cope alone with this growing complexity, hence a demand for cooperation evolves.

The ongoing reforms of internal structure of local government connected with the devolution of resources and competences, as well as the changing external relationships between the business community, local public bodies, individual bureaucrats and local politicians, increase institutional fragmentation. Thus internal and external reform processes generate an extended network of policy actors involved in local decision making.

Schools of thought in urban politics accentuate the changing role of local governments in decision making processes. Regime theory, corporatism, regulation theory or civic governance concepts differ in their emphasis on the importance of specific actors participating in local decision making. The paper reviews the competing theoretical assumptions for the importance of specific actors in local decision making. This addresses the question to what extent specific governance modes adopted in reaction to shrinking processes are an expression of a changing relationship between local governments and civil society or business actors in an international comparative context. Is there a trend to more convergence with respect to the adopted governance modes?

Keywords urban politics, devolution, local governments, local community, decision-making process in local governments

1. Introduction

At the end of the 19th century industrialization was connected with a massive movement of population from ru-

ral areas to the growing cities. Managing the rapid demographic and economic growth became the pivotal task for urban planning.

As this period of undampened economic growth has come to its end, some cities have experienced a continuous decline in population and employment over a fixed period, frequently alternating with periods of slow economic growth (Martinez-Fernandez & Wu, 2007: 45). These cities have undergone a critical period of urban development in which they have ceased to grow. Noticeable side effects are a structural oversupply of buildings, plots of land or infrastructure facilities, which, in consequence, lead to higher vacancy rates and incipient abandonment. In other words, cities are experiencing a crisis in their urban development.

Urban shrinking processes are increasingly understood as a phenomenon for research in urban politics. This encompasses entire cities, parts of them and metropolitan areas experiencing a fundamental decline in both their economic and social bases.

In a rather narrow perspective, shrinkage is focused on the changing demographic processes. However, shrinkage can also be interpreted in a broader sense, encompassing structural, economical and social changes. Shrinkage is most commonly used with a negative connotation, referring to a decline in population and incipient structural abandonment.

In Germany the notion shrinkage first emerged in the 1970s in conjunction with urban development relating to the demographic change process (Brandstetter et al., 2005: 55-58). In recent years, research has recognized shrinkage in urban development more and more "[...] as a blind spot that urged to be lightened" (Kabisch et al., 2006). Not surprisingly, shrinkage has become regarded as a hot topic, most notably in

urban developmental and planning science (Brandstetter et al., 2005: 55). The increased attention paid to the issue has also led to a wide range of publications outside the field of planning science.

The bulk of the publications on this subject can be assigned to the categories of urban sociology, social geography, urban and regional planning as well as business administrative housing industry. Here, and most notably, the practical problems of urban and regional planning in the context of shrinkage are highlighted (Altrock, 2005: 149). So research questions formulated in this context primarily deal with pragmatic issues like the right handling of underemployed infrastructure (McFarlane & Rutherford, 2008; Moss, 2008), coping with urban sprawl (Mace et al., 2007; Couch et al., 2005), revitalisation of abandoned buildings and areas, and the local economy as a whole (Lloyd et al., 2003; Sommer, 2007). In this spirit, the scientific discussion is dominated by struggles for proper social and planning strategies in order to cope with shrinkage (Hannemann, 2005: 10).

A lot of time in comparative research has been spent trying to ascertain the implications for urban governance triggered by recent reforms of the internal and external structure of local government, as well as by the changing relationships to third parties. This is not least a consequence of economic (financial adversity and reinforced competitive pressure) and socioeconomic environmental changes (new tasks in conjunction with progressive demographic change, for example) (Baldersheim & Wollmann, 2006: 111).

Focussing alone on the special implications for urban governance triggered by shrinking processes, the lack

of comparative empirical work is apparent, although a considerable number of national case studies exists. These case studies, however, deal with questions in a more descriptive manner. In this regard the search for new forms of governance (networks and partnerships) is the focus of interest accompanied by the question of how these new forms modify existing local governance structures (Gissendanner, 2003: 663f.). Furthermore, the vast majority of these studies are concentrated on cities, metropolitan agglomerations and city regions (Prigge & Schwarzer, 2006; Pallagst, 2007; Jones & Evans, 2006; Swyngedouw et al., 2002; McCarthy, 1998).

In Germany, urban politics research, comparative urban politics and administration research mainly deal with shrinkage in East German cities, which arose from transformation processes in the aftermath of German reunification (Glock & Häußermann, 2004; Glock, 2006). With few exceptions, there is a lack of research into how politics coped with shrinkage, especially in middle-sized cities and small towns. There seems to be a special need for research into policy-making in reaction to shrinkage in middle-sized cities and small towns.

The necessity for a theoretical frame arises, if closing the empirical gap described above is desired, especially when a deeper understanding rather than the testing of established theories is emphasised, and scholars want to go beyond pure description.

While the impact of globalization or information and communication technology on local policy-making has become “the central focus in research and debate” (Baldersheim & Wollmann, 2006: 121), the changing environment for local policy-making related to

shrinking processes did not induce similar theoretical debates. So scholars interested in the shrinkage issue can not rely on well-developed frameworks, and are therefore challenged to create a theoretical frame for their research.

In the absence of a well-defined model explaining the interplay of specific national reform efforts at the local level and simultaneous urban shrinking processes, this paper aims to contribute to a better understanding. For this reason, the paper first reviews the dominant schools of thought in urban politics. After that, the contribution of each school of thought to an analysis of shrinking processes is critically assessed in the light of recent empirical findings. On the basis of this assessment, I will identify theoretical shortcomings and elaborate building blocks for a potential theoretical frame, and then outline an integrated framework for analysis. In the conclusion, possibilities for further research will be discussed. How the various actors involved in local policy-making cope with urban shrinkage is at the centre of my interest, and the following literature review concentrates on publications which deal with this matter.

2. Literature review

Urban political science in Western Europe and the US particularly focuses on policy-making for shrinking processes in relation to overcoming temporary urban development crises. Correspondingly, the objective of resolving the urban development crisis is viewed as being a return to the growth in urban development (Bürkner, 2005: 14f.). Publications in this field, presented under keywords like urban regeneration (Roberts & Sykes, 1999), urban renewal or urban redevelopment, share the percep-

tion that initialisation and revitalisation of economic growth is a crucial factor in overcoming stagnating, negative urban development.

The vast majority of US American research in particular orientates itself on political economics, which try to explain “how interaction of government power and private resources constrain or condition urban political decision making” (DiGaetano & Strom, 2003: 357). Thus urban politics could be explained as the division of labour between state and market.

A great deal of this research therefore refers to political economics which emerged from the community power debate of the 1960s and 1970s in the US. Here local coalitions composed of several political and economic actors were regarded as playing a dominant role in the formulation of urban growth policies. Community power research concentrated on the question of who governs. The predominant role of local elites was underlined due to sufficient resource equipment, and other interests were excluded from decision making. By contrast, pluralists denied that decision structures were more or less controlled by local elites. Various interests competed with each other in order to gain influence on decision making. The local government therefore acted as a broker between competing pressure groups.

This perception is significantly influenced by the Growth Machines approach (Logan and Molotch, 1987) and the Urban Regime theory, which was formulated in particular by Stone (1989; 1993; 1998) and Elkin (1987).

Urban Regime theorists and analysts of the Growth Machines approach agree with neo-pluralist concerns. They regard limitations of problem solving as due to

the high complexity and fragmentation of the local decision making process (Stone, 1986; Stoker, 1995: 57). So both approaches are based on the notion of a weak local state which lacks sufficient institutional resources. Thus local governments have recently had to seek alliances with business actors. Similar to the Growth Machines approach, the Urban Regime theory sees a sense of partnership in the shared objective of pursuing entrepreneurial goals. Overcoming the stagnation of economic development by initialising innovation and investigation in urban infrastructure projects is a shared objective of both theoretical approaches.

Not surprisingly, both approaches also have been adapted for the Western European context, although the close connection to the specific urban development context in the US has been criticised. Due to the different roles of local economic actors and local administration for urban development policies and the deviating institutional embedding at the local political level, the adaptability of these approaches is seen by several authors as rather limited when compared with the US (Mossberger & Stoker, 2001; Stoker, 1995; Davies, 2002a). However, a number of authors have pointed out the relevance of these approaches for Europe, especially for Great Britain. Stone's Urban Regime approach has been adopted for specific national contexts particularly in Europe (DiGaetano & Klemanski, 1993; Stoker & Mossberger, 1994; Levine, 1994; Harding, 1997), and has been used to explain policy-making in urban shrinking contexts (Lawless, 1994; Strange, 1996; Ward, 1997; McCarthy, 1998; Miller, 1999).

The Urban Regime approach has also been critically discussed with re-

spect to its applicability to the German context (Gissendanner, 2002; Bahn et al., 2003). Some authors subsequently adapted the Urban Regime approach to the German context (Kleger, 1996; Strom, 1996; Franz, 2000), and used it to explain policy-making in urban shrinking contexts. Several authors have pointed out the emergence of local regimes, especially related to coping with shrinkage in East Germany. Most of these findings are linked to the accompanying scientific research into the “Stadtumbau Ost”, the Federal Government’s development scheme (Franz, 2007; Bürkner, 2005).

Apart from Urban Regime[s] and Growth Machines, there are more structuralist-centered political economic models. The political economic framework proposed by Savitch and Kantor (2004) mirrors this notion by highlighting the importance of market conditions and inter-governmental support as the driving variables for urban change. Another strand of political economics in this regard is based on neo-Marxist regulation theoretical approaches. A hallmark of this structural determinism is that the assessed crisis of capitalism demands a change in the accumulation modes (for instance from Fordism to post-Fordism), which partly effects modified consumption patterns in terms of welfare regulation or growing political influence of private businesses at a local state level. In this sense urban regimes reflect relatively abstract individual and organisational independent regulation modes (Lauria, 1997; Le Gales, 1998; Ettinger, 1994).

Urban regimes in urban development policies emerge in order to persist in the international competition for investment capital, although the sphere of

influence of these regimes is not only locally determined, but rather influenced by regional, national and in particular also by European market conditions and neoliberal policy agendas (Swyngedouw et al., 2002: 550-552; Sellers, 2002: 6-27; Skaburskis, 2004: 38-40).

However, such a shift towards more neoliberal policies is questioned by several empirical studies (DiGaetano & Strom, 2003: 359). John’s criticism is more fundamental in targeting the theoretical foundations of regulation theory: “Nothing about it is certain. Did Fordism ever exist? Does Fordism need regulation? Was there a crisis? Is there such a thing as post-Fordism?” (John, 2001: 19).

In the European urban politics research the notion of Urban Governance has emerged. Moreover, Urban Governance concepts are increasingly applied to explain policy-making in urban development policies. Based on the ambiguity and the inflationary use of this term, it is relatively difficult to achieve definite statements concerning urban policy-making processes. Pierre censoriously notes: “If governance, loosely defined, refers to any public-private exchange, then soon everything becomes governance” (1999: 376). In this regard Urban Governance does not defer to a dominant holistic coordination mechanism, but rather serves as an umbrella concept for a whole series of approaches explaining urban development policies. Regardless of which definition one may follow, governance refers to the fraying out of the border between the public and the private sector. Furthermore, governance research (in contrast to the older term government) accentuates the contribution to the fulfilment of public tasks by non-state actors from civil society and

the local economy. The participation of non-state actors in political decision making processes is therefore regarded as a necessary complement against the background of an increasingly overstrained local state. Part of the literature on urban governance is linked to rational choice theory, public choice and public management concepts. Here, public-private interaction is aimed at enhancing the efficiency of public service production delivery. This aim accentuates the role of businesses in public service delivery. Local governments get involved in competitive network coordination in the form of contracts with profit-oriented organizations, or in the form of internal markets, both within the public sector and between public and private sectors (John, 2001: 93; Pierre, 1999: 376ff.; Le Gales, 1998: 495).

But if the Urban Governance term characterises an analytic empirical approach, then the interest rather turns towards forms of action coordination which continue to persist in traditional political institutions. The traditional form of public governance, based on vertical command and control coordination, becomes complemented by forms of horizontal coordination like partnerships or networks (John, 2001: 93; Pierre, 1999: 377).

The use of analytical urban governance approaches to explain urban development policies in reaction to urban shrinkage is also most influential in the British context (Davies, 2002b, 2003; Jones & Evans, 2006). The development of these concepts can also be understood as a consequence of criticism of the US American urban research, and predominantly the Urban Regime and Growth Machines approaches (DiGaetano & Strom, 2003: 361f.; Gissendanner, 2002;

Davies, 2002a). Several authors see regimes or growth coalitions as subsets of governance, highlighting a specific network coalition where the relationship between political and economic elites is dominant, so that other actors involved are less influential (John, 2001: 52f.; Le Gales, 1998: 496).

In German urban politics research, Urban Governance concepts highlight the political-administrative system's central role as an explanatory variable (Bahn et al., 2003: 10). Such concepts tie in to discussions in the 1960s and 1970s which took place parallel to US American community power research. While US pluralists and elitists debated the influence of local pressure groups, the German discussion was centred on local councils, local administration and their influence on the local political-administrative system. Apart from the pronounced division of labour between private and public sectors in the political economic approaches, fragmented power structures refer to the institutional separation between politics and administration.

Similar to the US American debate, two competing concepts also opposed each other in Germany. Rolf-Richard Grauhan with his concept of executive leadership argued that, as executive leader, the mayor most significantly affects political strategies and activities (1972: 154f.).

By contrast, Gerhard Banner argued that the power centre of local policy-making could be regarded as a group of powerful preliminary decision makers comprising of leaders from the several local party groups, specialised politicians from the local council, and high-level civil servants from the local administration. This group of pre-

liminary decision makers is the result of reciprocal dependence between local council and local administration (1972: 166; 1982: 43).

In Germany governance concepts have been developed which allow for the growing importance of non-state actors from civil society and the economy at the local level by identifying new forms of coordination, although most of the described governance forms continue to see state actors as central players (Fürst, 2007: 6). In this way the German discussion on the role of the state in Urban Governance concepts also distances itself from the Anglo-Saxon debate (for an overview see Davies, 2002b; Lang, 2005: 19-21). Though the urban renewal debate still focuses on conceptual deliberations regarding urban renewal's material configuration in Germany, it is not surprising that Urban Governance concepts are also adopted to explain urban development policies as a consequence of urban shrinkage (Prigge & Schwarzer, 2006). Even in the interesting policy fields of urban and spatial planning and housing policy, state influence is still strong (Lang & Tenz, 2007: 3). Much of the work is, once again, concentrated on the analysis of urban development policies in East Germany linked to the accompanying scientific research into the "Stadtumbau Ost", the Federal Government's development scheme (Bernt, 2005; Altröck, 2005; Glock, 2006).

Theoretical shortcomings in the explanation of the actors' behaviour

The literature review presented in the previous section shows that explaining policy-making regarding shrinkage is affected by rival theoretical perspectives. So, Urban Regime, Growth Machines and the varieties of Urban Go-

vernance differ in their characterization of openness and their explanation of objective targets for coalition building. Moreover, the feasibility of a cross-national analysis suffers from strong dependence on specific national contexts (Urban Regime and Growth Machines approaches), from the focus on large cities and structural factors (Sellers, 2002, Savitch & Kantor, 2004; Swynedouw et al., 2002), and from the application of relatively diffuse Governance explanations.

In contrast to the more normatively influenced Anglo-Saxon governance literature, which assumes a declining importance in local governments and administrations to the benefit of non-governmental actors from civil society and private business, empirical studies, examining policy-making in shrinking processes, reveal an increase in the importance of public actors (Prigge & Schwarzer, 2006; Glock, 2006; Davies, 2001). This finding is only partially explained by urban reform processes, institutional embedding at the local level and deviant national or regional economic change processes, as in the case of East Germany (Kuhlmann, 2006; Wollmann, 2008).

Coalitions in redevelopment policies are rather characterized by asymmetric power and decision making structures (Davies, 2005). In line with these findings, Hill and Lynn (2005) find evidence in their meta-analysis of journal articles, including the core journals of empirical studies on public sector governance, that hierarchy is still the dominant governance style in public service delivery and policy-making in Western Europe.

A further shortcoming could be seen in the insufficient recognition of conflict. The vast majority of Urban Governance

and Urban Regime literature implies, “[...] that the relationships amongst the major stakeholders are mainly cooperative and consensual, captured in the common use of the terms ‘partnerships’ or ‘collaborative networks’” (Minnery, 2007: 327). However, recent empirical studies highlight the quite conflictual character of relationships in urban redevelopment policies (Glock, 2006; Davies, 2004: 562).

Even the description of Urban Governance as a heterarchy, associated with consensual horizontal modes of governance, lacks a satisfactory explanation for the empirical observation of conflict. Moreover, there is no explanation of what conflict means to the sustainability of urban redevelopment coalitions (Davies, 2005: 311). In this regard, Kjeaar rightly claims that “the weaknesses of governance theory are that it often fails to focus on issues of power, conflict and interests” (Kjeaar, 2009: 137).

What is also widely absent in current literature on urban politics is the awareness of administrative cultures. The adoption of certain governance modes or mixtures is influenced by the socio-political administrative state traditions and cultures in which governance takes place (Meuleman, 2008: 61-65).

The term administrative culture refers to conventions of individual behaviour, standardised interactions, and decision making processes of civil servants in the implementation of public policies. Administrative cultures have developed over a long period of time, learning from experience within existing institutional structures (van Vaarden, 1993: 70f.).

Differences in the national administrative cultures within Europe (for example, the *Rechtsstaat* model in Germany, with its strong emphasis of the role

of law and command and control coordination, or the public-interest model in the UK, with its emphasis on less formalised types of coordination and a modest role for the state in society) influence the adoption and success of certain governance styles within the national context. Meuleman argues “that there seems to be something like a ‘national governance footprint’: the more or less stereotypical ‘average’ composition of the mixture of hierarchy, network and market governance” (2008: 65).

Advice about the observed persistent importance of state actors, asymmetric power and decision making structures, and the observation of conflict within urban redevelopment coalitions, is delivered by German case study findings from coalitions in urban redevelopment policies (Bürkner, 2005; Glock, 2006) on policy-making in shrinkage situations. Actors were confronted with a highly complex situation due to the simultaneousness and interdependence of economic and socioeconomic transformation processes. Not surprisingly, the actors were uncertain regarding the future effects of shrinking processes.

Against the background of the findings in Germany, I suppose that adopted governance modes vary due to the specific institutional embedding of local governments. Moreover, national reform paths differ, and, as the German cases show, the specific economical and socio-economical environment was also influential in the adopted governance mode. The adoption of a specific governance mode in reaction to a shrinking experience therefore depends on the institutional embedding of local governments, the national reform path, and the specific economic and socioeconomic environment. Within this overall trend

of variance, I alternatively suppose that the special characteristics of the shrinkage situation have a distinct influence on the set up of governance modes in reaction to shrinking. The development crisis situation might lead to the emergence of functional equivalents according to the governance modes used to cope with problems caused by shrinkage.

The observation deduced from the findings in the German cases, in which coalitions emerge where state actors exert a leading function as political entrepreneurs, seems to be relevant in other national institutional settings as well. In addition, coalitions in urban development crisis situations feature similar structural characteristics. So the shrinking coalitions in Germany share a relatively exclusive character, and the scope of the coalitions was limited to specific issues concerning the shrinking process. I would further argue that some institutional characteristics might be more helpful in coping with uncertainty and ambiguity than others. So the limited focus and the relatively small number of actors involved due to the exclusive character could be seen as a way of reducing complexity and minimizing conflict potential.

To summarize, the current literature on urban politics is not appropriate to sufficiently analyze empirically observed patterns of governance in reaction to urban development crisis situations. In this regard it does not make sense not to continue in the search of specific horizontal governance forms (such as urban regimes and growth coalitions) in the exploration of shrinkage. Based on the observation of changing state governance structures at the local level, it seems to be more interesting to focus on the following questions: to what extent

these differences can be attributed to national specifics of institutional embedding at the local level and administrative culture, and to what extent other contextual factors influence the choice of governments forms.

Although this correlation has been pointed out in a series of publications, it is still lacking in terms of systematic examinations of the role and influence of these contextual factors on specific forms of governance in situations of bare “redistribution mass”. Starting from this observation it might be useful to clarify the impact of contextual conditions in shrinking situations, and therefore regard contextual factors in shrinking situations as independent variables which have an influence both on the choice of actors involved in decision making and on the form of coordination. However, the outlined theoretical explanations in urban politics underscore the impact of situational context variables in urban development crisis and their influence on the governing of self-governing institutions or networks in redevelopment or renewal policies. In order to overcome these explanatory shortcomings, an analytical frame is demanded which incorporates situational context variables in urban development crisis as an independent explanatory factor, and delivers proper operationalization concerning how these variables affect the governing of self-governing institutions or networks in redevelopment or renewal policies.

3. Building blocks for an explanatory model of governance in urban development crisis situations

It is undisputable that each school of thought provides explanatory value for a cross-national analysis of urban shrinking processes. Structural explanation

provides some insights into the importance of the wider market environment and regional, national or international government structures which affect local governance.

Especially in the case of urban shrinkage it could be assumed that the described side effects of shrinkage, like higher vacancy rates, incipient abandonment and unemployment, overburden public and private actors at the local level due to insufficient resources. Thus local actors in shrinking cities are heavily dependent on national or European development schemes in order to cope with the consequences of shrinkage in urban development (Glock, 2006: 71).

The rational, actor centred, political economics locate the significant influence of local actors in the urban policy production process. They share the assumption that policies at the local level are predictable by analysis of local decision making. The Urban Regime and the Growth Machines approaches offer some explanation as to how local actors react to socioeconomic conditions. Urban Regime scholars and scholars with governance background recognize that the independency of local governments in decision making is no longer effective. Local governments experience a need for functional cooperation with non-state actors in order to fulfil all their tasks. Consequently, the importance of hierarchical, institutionalised coordination for local decision making is declining. As a result, new forms of cooperation evolve or existing forms of cooperation are enhanced (John, 2001).

Cooperation goes hand-in-hand with network coordination. Thus, network coordination supports coalitions of shared responsibility and trust. In doing so, stable forms of partnership can

emerge. This is fundamental to overcoming the shortcomings of a fragmented decision making structure. Network coordination relies also on consensual forms of decision making.

*Actor-centred institutionalism
as analytical frame for
an explanatory model*

Some recent accounts attempt to overcome the shortcomings of a single level analysis by constructing amalgams of two, or all three levels in order to explain urban governance patterns from a cross-national perspective. What is needed for such an integrative approach, however, is a basis for bypassing the distance between rational actor-oriented explanations on the micro-level and structural explanations on the macro-level.

In agreement with DiGaetano et al. (DiGaetano & Strom, 2003: 362), "New Institutionalism" could help to integrate the competing schools of thought. Besides the high variance of approaches within the new institutionalist school of thought, they share the same view that "institutional factors are the most appropriate points of departure for social analysis" (Peters, 2005: 156).

What all new institutionalist approaches have in common is the notion that "institutions matter". The majority of literature on this issue does not deny that individuals act formally and rationally; however, they stress that individuals also act substantively and rationally. In this way institutional structures constrain or guide an actor's behaviour. There is a wide range of definitions among the various forms of new institutionalism describing what institutions are, and in what way they constrain or guide the actors' behaviour. Different

research questions arise depending on which definition of the term ‘institution’ is used. While for sociological and culturalist approaches, institutions provide cognitive patterns or models that enable individuals to interpret their and others’ actions, for rational choice-inspired approaches, institutions define individuals’ behaviour by formal rules (Peters, 2005: 160f.; Glock & Häußermann, 2004: 66f.; Koß, 2007: 44f.).

To gain a cross-national perspective, an understanding of institutions is required which enables proper measurement, or, in other words, “defining those institutions in a way that is inter-subjectively transmissible and that fits with the canons of contemporary social science” (Peters, 2005: 159). Institutional approaches following a “softer” definition of institutions, encompassing not only formal institutions but also norms, values, symbol systems, cognitive scripts or moral schemes, cause some challenges in measurement (*ibid.*).

An approach inspired by new institutionalism, which pays attention to the methodical concerns outlined above, is “Actor-centered Institutionalism” (AI), developed by Renate Mayntz and Fritz W. Scharpf (Mayntz & Scharpf, 1995; Scharpf, 2006).

Aimed at the examination of governance structures in market sectors, which are closely state-related, the AI focuses on the interplay of public regulation and societal self-regulation. The AI assumes that “social phenomena have to be explained as the product of interaction between intentional acting, individuals, collective and corporatist actors. However, the interaction is affected by the surrounding institutional context, which thereby influences the result of interaction” [translated according to the

German original] (Scharpf, 2006: 1). By acknowledging that the actors’ behaviour is a dependent and intentional institutional path, the AI takes a middle position between historical institutionalism and rational-choice institutionalist approaches (Koß, 2007: 46, footnote 1).

The AI overcomes the difficulty that action orientations of actors are neither inter-subjective nor inter-temporal by deconstructing the complex concept of action orientation into single constituents, which can be measured by institutional or empiric indicators (Scharpf, 2006: 110f.). Policies are therefore the result of different interaction styles among the concerned actors. These interaction styles are rooted in the interplay of the institutional context and the specific action situation, as well as the action orientation of the involved actors (Mayntz & Scharpf, 1995: 46).

The AI differentiates between four interaction styles: unilateral action, negotiations, majority decisions and hierarchical governance which could evolve into various institutional contexts. These institutional contexts can be arranged on a continuum from less institutionalized “anarchic fields” over networks, regimes and associations to hierarchic organizations and the state (Scharpf, 2006: 91).

The interplay between actors, interaction style and institutional context refers to a definition of governance which describes governance as the totality of institutional arrangements, including its rules and its rulemaking actors (Hollingsworth et al., 1994: 5).

In that sense urban regimes or growth machines could be regarded as specific forms of the governance mode network coordination. However, the AI does not constitute a closed explanatory model; rather it describes an analy-

tic framework which combines specific meso-level theories in the form of single explanation modules (Scharpf, 2006: 63-66).

Building up an explanatory model on the basis of AI as analytical frame

The openness of the AI framework makes possible the integration of the wider market environment and socio-economic factors, as well as the national institutional context as a structural constraint for actors' interaction. Therefore the national institutional embedding and the socio-economic and wider market environment constitute the action frame for actors involved in local policy-making.

Apart from the national institutional and structural context mentioned above, I also regard administrative culture as an influencing factor, although the AI focuses on actors and institutions. This focus finds its obvious expression in the narrow definition of institutions which excludes cognitive maps and belief systems. In doing so, the AI avoids the well-known problem of actor-centred approaches which frequently look for/find intentional explanations that are neither inter-temporal nor stable (*ibid.*: 110f.).

In order to explain the actors' interaction orientation, the AI split this complex concept into its constituent parts, which could be better determined by institutional or other empirically observable indicators. Preferences are regarded as one crucial constituent part of the actors' interaction orientation. These preferences are in turn influenced by self-interests, normative role expectations and the identity of an actor. Whereas normative role expectation can be derived with the help of institutional indicators, self-interest is relatively transparent from a

limited rational point of view. However, there are situations in which neither self-interest nor normative role expectations provide clear orientation. In such cases, the actors' ability to develop their own identity could promote decision making. Organisations could also develop their own identities, which would enhance the ability of organisational members to reduce complexity and contingency in decision making (*ibid.*: 116-121). In this sense administrative cultures are the expression of organizational identities of public authorities, and therefore commensurable with an analytic understanding based on the AI.

The influence of contextual variables in development crisis situations and institutional settings for policy-making in the AI also has to be further explained. As outlined in the previous chapter, I regard contextual factors in shrinking situations as independent variables, which have an influence both on the choice of actors involved in decision making and on the form of coordination. In order to integrate contextual factors into my explanation, I will now refer to contributions in crisis management network- and governance literature. The expanding field of disaster and crisis management literature delivers some valuable suggestions about how one can conceptualize the impact of contextual factors on decision making in extreme situations. As Moynihan (2008: 351) claims:

Crises are characterized by high consequentiality, limited time, high political salience, uncertainty, and ambiguity. Large-scale crises overwhelm individual organizations and demand a network of responders.

Another definition of modern crisis by Boin and 't Hart (2003: 545) further accentuates the idea that contemporary

crises are characterized by an open-ended time frame, meaning that crises are dynamic processes which do not follow a linear time scale. According to both authors:

A crisis may smolder, flare up, wind down, flare up again, depending as much on the pattern of physical events as on the framing and interpretation of these events by the mass media, politics and the general public. The scope of the crisis may expand and contract depending on which themes and issues command attention at different points in time (2003: 545f.).

Comparing both definitions with the exogenous developments in urban shrinkage processes, one can identify some obvious similarities. An open ended time frame, uncertainty, political salience and ambiguity are also characteristic of urban shrinkage processes and may trigger the conflictual interaction patterns observed. According to Bommel (2005: 7f.), urban renewal is best characterized by an ever-changing environment, where existing plans are challenged by new ideas for solutions which emerge all the time.

As several scholars remark, crises are societal problems that cut across traditional public boundaries requiring multi-actor coordination (Boin & 't Hart, 2003: 547f.; Moynihan, 2008: 354; Rosenthal & Kouzmin, 1997). Cooperation in the form of multiple actor networks is necessary, since none of those involved possess enough resources to successfully carry out crisis management by themselves. Networks are defined as a loose structural form with voluntary membership and consensus dependent decision making, in which actors retain some sort of strategic autonomy. Powel (1991: 269)

describes these circumstances in a quite concrete manner. Network cooperation is “[...] more a marriage than a one night stand, but there is no marriage license, no common household, no pooling of assets”.

In the light of these observations, network coordination seems to increase rather than decrease. According to the contextual factors outlined above, network coordination hardly seems suited to react to crisis situations appropriately (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004: 6-8). Moreover, network governance is not limited to crisis response action. To some degree governments have always operated through cooperative arrangements of various kinds. However, network governance in crisis situations possesses comparable characteristics which differ from network governance in non-crisis situations. Thus crisis response networks tend to be small and exclusive, relying to some degree on prior working relationships between concerned actors (Boin & 't Hart, 2003: 551; Moynihan, 2008: 361).

According to network and governance, theoretical contributions on the organization and management of networks (Sorensen, 2006; Jessop, 2002), and especially on the management of networks in situations characterized by uncertainty and ambiguity (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004), can be explained by these deviant patterns of network coordination as specific adjustment to the crisis context.

The similarities described in the institutionalization of crisis network structures in terms of membership, openness and size, correspond well with Matthew Kraatz's (1998) empirical findings on the impact of strong network ties in situations of environmental change de-

scribed by uncertainty and ambiguity. Referring to Granovetter's (1982) three characteristics of strong network ties (frequent interaction, extended history, and intimacy between the parties in the relationship), Kraatz (1998: 623) claims that strong ties between network members are better suited to managing situations of environmental change, "[...] the trust and mutual identification that are likely to exist when ties are strong make it more likely both that organizations will share valuable information with one another and that the information provided will be taken into account and acted upon". Kraatz (*ibid.*: 624) also points out that strong ties are characteristic for smaller networks composed of actors who gain experience in long lasting mutual working relationships.

A second set of comparable characteristics in crisis response networks refer to the management of these networks. As outlined above, governance is an umbrella concept for different types of policy instruments and styles of public policy-making that departs from the command and control style. Governance highlights the distinction between the command and control style and alternative forms of coordination by pointing to the various extant ways of interaction. In this sense vertical command control coordination is supplemented by horizontal forms of coordination. Embedded in the notion of governance there is an emphasis on the importance of networks and the cross organizational and sectoral links between policy-makers, actors and practitioners in overcoming problems involving collective action. In contrast with hierarchies, which rely on command control coordination, and markets, which rely on competition, network coordination

is characterized by consensual rules of decision making.

According to the contextual factors in crisis situations, and several sources of uncertainty inherent to network coordination, the management of crisis response networks also differs. Moynihan (2008: 361) finds evidence for the greater importance of hierarchical decision making structures, which he explains as the necessity to utilize centralization of decision making in order to adjust to a greater need for coordination. In line with Moynihan's findings, Meuleman agrees on the importance of bureaucratic top-down procedures (2008: 43), although he also asserts that "on the other hand, hierarchy has proven to not being able to solve multi-actor, multi-sector, multi-level problems: they are too fuzzy" (*ibid.*).

These findings correspond with theoretical literature on network and governance coping with uncertainty in network management. Neither old bureaucratic (hierarchical) coordination nor network coordination could be considered as a panacea. More simply, the crisis context (open ended time frame, uncertainty, high political salience and ambiguity) fosters the establishment of a specific complex mixture of hierarchical and network forms of governance. Some sort of greater coordination is required in order to overcome the shortcomings of network coordination and successfully cope with problems characterized by uncertainty and ambiguity (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004: 6f., 243-249), or as Eva Sorensen (2006: 98) argues, "Governance requires various forms of regulation of self-regulation".

Jan Kooiman (2003: 81f.) distinguishes three orders of governing. The first order is described as routine go-

verning linked to concrete problem solving. Attempts to change the institutional settings in order to influence a first order condition can be understood as second order governing. Third order governing is described “[...] as governing activities aimed at the broad principles that concern the way of governing itself, either first or second order takes place” (*ibid.*). Kooiman’s definition of third order governing is conceptualized as meta-governance. Whilst influenced by Kooiman, Bob Jessop’s (2002) definition of meta-governance differs slightly from the former’s conceptualization. Jessop’s definition of meta-governance (*ibid.*: 49) is therefore:

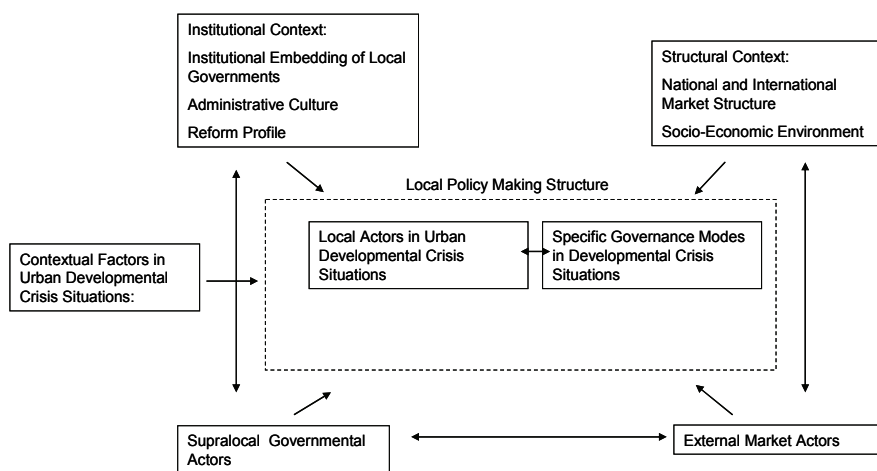
[...] the organization of the conditions for governance and involves the judicious mixing of market, hierarchy, and networks to achieve the best possible outcomes from the viewpoint of those engaged in meta-governance. In this sense it also means the organization of the conditions of governance in terms of their structurally inscribed strategic selectivity, i.e., in terms of their asymmetrical privileging of some outcomes over others.

Whilst remaining fully aware that meta-governance is more or less an umbrella concept for different instruments of regulating self-regulation, the question arises how meta-governance is carried out. In order to classify the various ways of exercising meta-governance, Sorensen (2006: 101) distinguishes 4 types of meta-governance:

1. Hands-off framing of self-governance;
2. Hands-off storytelling;
3. Hands-on support and facilitation;
4. Hands-on participation.

The first type can be described as indirect steering of self-governing institutions and networks by political, financial, and organizational attempts to exert influence on the context within which governance takes place. The second type can refer to attempts by the meta-governor to foster a common understanding or identity between actors involved. In the third type, the meta-governor fulfils the role of supportive facilitator by interacting directly with actors involved in self-governing. Finally, in the fourth type, the meta-governor directly influences the outcomes of self-governance through direct participation (*ibid.*: 101f.). Coming back to the observation of underlying command and control mechanisms in German and British redevelopment networks, and the influential role that state actors play in these networks, one can argue that both observations are expressions of meta-governance, despite its conceptualization as an urban regimes policy network or partnership. Sorensen suggests that meta-governance can be exercised by any resourceful actor, although there is some evidence that state actors, according to their relative autonomy and resources, are more capable of exercising meta-governance (Jessop, 2002: 49f.; Sorensen, 2006: 102). European urban regimes, which some authors have localized in different nationally embedded urban political decision making structures, could be regarded as special forms of meta-governance in response to the specific circumstances in urban development crises.

Chart. Explanatory frame for the investigation of governance in urban development crisis situations



4. Conclusion

The theoretical framework I outlined in the third chapter constitutes the platform from which I want to investigate the governance of development crisis situations. It also offers some explanations regarding my prior research questions. First, how can one analyse the influence that the institutional and structural environment and specific, simultaneously-running national reform programmes at the local level have on decision making in urban development crisis situations? Second, how can one explain certain functionally equivalent patterns in the institutionalization and management of decision making in urban development crisis situations?

As the literature review shows, governance in urban development crisis situations stresses a need for alternative forms of self-governance, foremost network coordination. Additionally, self-governance with regard to the specific situational context factors in urban de-

velopment crisis situations (ambiguity and uncertainty) has become more ambitious. Institutional adjustments to the structure and the management of self-governance can therefore be seen as adjustments triggered by the specific situational context. The result could therefore be understood as a specific form of self-governance, characterised by structural and managerial adjustments which differ from self-governance in non-development crisis situations.

Firstly, development crisis situations trigger the adjustment of local decision making structures. This will lead to an increased adoption of horizontal forms of network governance in order to cope with crisis situations. Moreover, I assume that adopted modes of self-governance vary due to the path dependent institutional embedding, the local reform profile, and the wider market environment of local governments.

Secondly, similar adjustments to the structure and the management of self-governance can be explained primari-

ly by situational context factors which occur in development crisis situations. Despite the above-described pattern of variance according to the institutional embedding reform profile, and the wider market environment of local governments, I see evidence for functional equivalents according to the structure and management of self-governance modes used to cope with problems in development crisis situations.

Finally, I will now briefly refer to certain methodical challenges facing the desired empirical cross-national research approach. The obvious problem in ascertaining the starting point and endpoint of shrinkage and the high variance according to the shrinkage background, is a serious obstacle for a comparative research design. Shrinking backgrounds differ from country to country as well as within countries. This raises the question of comparing apples with oranges when analyzing redevelopment or renewal policies in an international perspective. Whilst remaining aware of the small-N problem and the complexity of shrinking processes, some sort of a similar shrinkage background is required in order to control intervening background variables related to the causes of shrinkage. Moreover, shrinkage can hardly be seen as a well-defined linear process with fixed starting points and endpoints. Shrinkage is characterized by a long-lasting, non-linear process, making it difficult to define an endpoint when comparing cases with deviant starting points. The danger exists that maturation effects in the decision making process for redevelopment or renewal policies are overlooked.

While in big-N research, selection bias can be approached with random sampling, this is not possible in small-N

research as intended here. Furthermore, the sampling is limited in respect to the interesting problem of urban shrinkage. Based on this problem, the method of matching (King et al., 1994: 204) might be a proper solution for avoiding selection bias. It is necessary to select cases which feature similar characteristics in the critical context variables (relating to shrinkage background and variation in time). I assume that structural industrial transformation processes in certain industrial sectors in Europe feature similar patterns according to variation in time. Besides, one must be especially careful to avoid the selection of extreme cases. Selected cases should be compared with other possible cases in the respective national context to check for noticeable deviations.

In addition, one has to make sure cases are not selected on the basis of dependent variables, thereby already anticipating the result. There should be a case sampling based on independent variables (*ibid.*: 124-137). Accordingly, middle-sized cities in Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Sweden, displaying similarities in view of the shrinkage background, should be selected for international comparison. Desk research lends some support to the assessment that there are variations in the institutional and structural explanatory variables (institutional integration at the local level, the national administrative culture and the importance of the local and trans-local market environment). However, so far only a rough case screening has been conducted. Intensive attempts at case selection are appropriate in order to clarify which middle-sized cities in each of the country cases are potentially affected by urban shrinkage in the aftermath of industrial change processes.

A comparative heuristic method is needed in order to go beyond description. Therefore I want to adapt Mill's method (Mill, [1843] 1967). A "par for par adoption" of Mill's logic for the analysis of complex macro-social phenomena (Ragin, 1987: 44) might be misleading. There are several serious problems concerning Mill's method, especially in dealing with multiple and conjunctural causation, and the rigid, purely technical application of this method might not be useful for the desired comparison. But the logic of Mills' method "[...] provide[s] rough guidelines for the conduct of comparative inquiry, especially for carrying on a dialogue with the evidence" (*ibid.*).

Some suggestions about how to deal with these kinds of problems are offered in Przeworski and Teune (1970). They follow a variable-oriented approach with

the most similar system design and the most different system design (*ibid.*: 30). In the most similar system design, the selection of cases should guarantee constant parameters in order to observe closely the influence of specific independent variables on specific dependent variables. By contrast, in the most different system design, the selection of cases should guarantee as many different context parameters as possible. Mill's method makes no difference to the logic of Przeworski & Teune (1970), and the later work is even based on Mill's logic. However, Przeworski & Teune proceed with a probabilistic link between independent and dependent variables. In that regard, it is not possible to attribute a single explanatory variable to an event; the probability of an event rather arises if a specific explanatory variable is present (Ragin, 1987: 51; Lieberson, 1992: 106-107).

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Upravljanje u situacijama urbane razvojne krize

SAŽETAK Proces urbanog sažimanja sve se više prepoznaju kao pojava za istraživanje u urbanoj politici, koja obuhvaća cijele gradove ili njihove dijelove te metropolitanska područja u kojima dolazi do fundamentalnog smanjivanja njihove ekonomske i društvene baze. Gradovi se suočavaju sa složenim društvenim problemima kao što su procesi starenja stanovništva, a istodobno prolaze i kroz procese sažimanja. Zamjetne su nuspojave tih procesa preobrazbe više stope nezaposlenosti i nedostatanje iskorištavanje infrastrukturnih objekata. Stoga se gradovi više ne mogu sami nositi s tom rastućom kompleksnošću, pa se javlja potreba za suradnjom.

Tekuće reforme unutarnje strukture lokalne samouprave povezane s prijenosom resursa i ovlasti, te promjene vanjskih odnosa poslovne zajednice, lokalnih javnih tijela, pojedinačnih birokrata i lokalnih političara, povećavaju institucionalnu fragmentaciju. Stoga procesi unutarnjih i vanjskih reformi stvaraju proširenu mrežu aktera kreiranja javnih politika koji su uključeni u lokalno odlučivanje.

Različite škole mišljenja u urbanoj politici naglašavaju promjenu uloge lokalnih vlasti u procesima odlučivanja. Teorija režima, korporativizam, teorija regulacije ili koncepcije građanskog upravljanja razlikuju se prema tome koliko ističu važnost konkretnih aktera koji sudjeluju u lokalnom odlučivanju. U ovom se radu daje pregled konkurentnih teorijskih pretpostavki o važnosti konkretnih aktera u lokalnom odlučivanju. Razmatra se pitanje u kojoj su mjeri pojedini oblici upravljanja, koji su usvojeni kao odgovor na procese sažimanja, izraz promjena odnosa lokalnih vlasti i civilnog društva ili poslovnih aktera u međunarodnom komparativnom kontekstu. Postoji li u pogledu na usvojene oblike upravljanja trend prema sve većoj konvergenciji?

KLJUČNE RIJEČI urbana politika, decentralizacija, lokalna samouprava, lokalna zajednica, proces odlučivanja u lokalnoj samoupravi