Workshop Proposal for the Joint Sessions 2002

Title of proposed workshop: «The politics of metropolitan governance»

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The Politics of Metropolitan Governance

1. Outline of the topic

Urban areas can no longer be considered as cities in the traditional (weberian) sense of territorially integrated socio-economic entities. In the contemporary age of globalisation, they are better described as metropolitan areas, that is multi-centered urban regions structured by the social, economic and cultural dynamics of modern societies. They develop and extend mainly along functional networks, more or less independently from institutional boundaries. As a consequence, metropolitan areas in most western countries cover a multitude of different sub-national or even national political administrative units. Such a situation of «governmental fragmentation» (Dente 1990: 60) almost inevitably leads to difficulties for the solving of public problems in metropolitan areas. Thus, it is no wonder that throughout the 20th century, territorial reforms have been decided and implemented in metropolitan areas, in order to achieve a better congruence between the spatial dynamics of metropolitan problems and the institutional structures to address these problems. In most countries, however, these reforms were unable to keep up with the accelerated pace of urbanisation, all the more so that local resistance against such reforms has grown stronger over the years. In the last three decades, failure seemed to be the rule for attempts to create encompassing governmental structures for metropolitan areas in OECD countries 1.

As a consequence of slowed-down or failed reforms of the territorial institutional structure, policy co-ordination in metropolitan areas is nowadays mostly achieved through issue-based and more or less formalised mechanisms of co-ordination - best described by the term of metropolitan governance. In all metropolitan areas in the OECD, there are scores of purpose-oriented networks of co-ordination and co-operation, involving municipalities, governmental agencies of various levels, as well as private service providers. These heterogeneous conglomerates of actors and agencies with various resources, valuing competencies and skills rather than institutional criteria, appear as the major thrust of metropolitan policy-making today.

Against this general background, the proposed workshop aims to address an issue that has been raised - explicitly or implicitly - by many contemporary analyses of the new metropolitan governance, but that lacks systematic theoretical and empirical assessment to date. More precisely, we are interested in how these new modes of metropolitan policy-making affect the structures and procedures of politics in metropolitan areas. Indeed, contemporary research confirms that metropolitan governance today appears as a mainly "managerial", and somewhat technocratic, approach to metropolitan problem-solving. The rationale behind such purpose-oriented metropolitan governance is "to get things done": networks are constructed according to an incremental mixture of criteria ranging from technical know-how, financial resources and legal competencies to diffuse considerations of 'concernment'. It remains unclear, however, what this signifies for the linkage of policy-making to politics in metropolitan areas. As such, this question has been raised by many scholars on metropolitan governance, but it still awaits a differentiated answer that goes beyond the somewhat simplistic argument of a democratic deficit supposedly inherent to the new modes of metropolitan governance.

1 The most famous ones include the failed attempts to create city provinces in Amsterdam and Rotterdam in the Netherlands, turned down by referendum in 1995, and the failed merger of the two Länder of Berlin and Brandenburg in Germany, also turned down by referendum in 1996.
The workshop thus aims to create an opportunity for a theoretically argued and empirically based differentiation of an issue that is at the top of the current research agenda on metropolitan areas. By the same token, it aims to contribute to the more general debate in contemporary policy analysis on the relationship between new modes of policy-making and democratic politics.

To our knowledge, the theme of this workshop has not been treated in any other ECPR Joint Sessions in the last three years. In 1998, at the Warwick Joint Sessions, the workshop on «Local political systems» included a focus on politics on the local level, but did not address dynamics that go beyond the boundaries of single local administrative entities. In Mannheim in 1999, the workshop «The changing role of local councillors» (H. Larsen and A. Offerdal) examined the changes in ways roles of local councillors are defined and played out. Touching upon the question of local government reform and especially New Public Management, the workshop however did not refer to the inter-locality perspective inherent to metropolitan governance. The workshop «Associational Engagement and Democracy in Cities» (W. Maloney and G. Stoker), held at the 2000 Joint Sessions in Copenhagen, was concerned with social capital and democratic quality in urban politics, but equally focused on single cities. The workshop «Governance and democratic legitimacy» (I. Papadopoulos and Ph. Warin), scheduled for the Grenoble Joint Sessions in 2001, addresses the link between new modes of governance and democratic legitimacy, but does not specifically refer to the multi-layered territorial issues of governance and democracy that are specific to the issue of metropolitan governance.

2. Relation to existing research

Metropolitan governance: old and new

The nature of metropolitan governance has been much discussed in the academic fields of political science and public administration in the last fifty years (cf. Dente 1990; Lowery 1999). But the question of metropolitan institutions also cyclically returns on the political agenda, according to the pace and the dynamics of the continued spatial extension of urban areas (Heinz 2000a: 245). Of course, the terms in which the issue is debated - scientifically and politically - has changed over time and with regard to the experiences that were made. During the 1960s and the 1970, the major thrust in the debate on metropolitan government reforms was a search for correspondence between the functional territory and the institutional territory, i.e. the formal government structure (Lefèvre 1998: 11). The basic underlying argument was that only the congruence of these two territories could simultaneously assure efficacy and equity in the provision of public services to the population of metropolitan areas. However, the implementation of metropolitan government structures proved to be a disappointing experience in many OECD countries: mostly set up in an authoritarian manner, they failed to gain the support of local elites and interest groups, and were not recognised as legitimate political institutions by the population (Lefèvre 1998: 15-16).

As a consequence of repeated failures of metropolitan government reforms, the ambition of creating encompassing metropolitan institutions gradually disappeared. In most OECD countries, metropolitan policy-making nowadays relies on incrementally constructed,

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2 Already in the 1960s, this contention was heavily criticised by public choice theorists, who argued that governmental fragmentation and smallness of local authorities are essential to maintaining competition among service providers and that co-operation among them should be based on voluntary agreements. For a review of this debate, see Lowery (1999).
issue-based co-operative arrangements between various types of public and private agencies (Van den Berg, Van Klink & Van der Meer 1993; Healey et al. 1995; Bagnasco & Le Galès 1997; Jouve & Lefèvre 1999b; Heinz 2000b). Contemporary mechanisms of metropolitan policy-making are not a priori centred around public agencies. Instead, current metropolitan governance is achieved by self-governing networks, where public agencies are partners among others. It is thus closely related to the transformations of public policy making in general - 'from government to governance', as these transformations have been labelled (cf. Kooiman 1993; Le Galès 1995, 1998; Leca 1996; Rhodes 1996; Stoker 1998; Pierre 2000; Leresche 1999). Although more or less successful structures of metropolitan government recently emerged in some areas (e.g. Stuttgart, Bologna, Lyon, Toronto) (Jouve & Lefèvre 1999b; Heinz 2000b), the logic behind these is totally different from past decades. Indeed, whereas the reforms of the 1960s and 1970s tried to start off with the creation of a metropolitan authority with overarching competencies, the contemporary metropolitan structures are the end of a long process of gradual integration of a multitude of agencies and localities that are involved in issue-based co-operation in various policy fields (Lefèvre 1998: 18). In contrast to failed experiments in the past, contemporary approaches do not conceive metropolitan governance as requiring a full-blown encompassing governmental structure, but less ambitiously build upon the day-to-day co-ordination in various sectoral policies. Hence, there is a strong emphasis on the metropolitan area as a territory of policies, but not necessarily as a territory of politics.

**New metropolitan governance and democracy**

Many scholars of metropolitan governance have viewed these mostly managerial dynamics behind the new modes of metropolitan governance with an uneasy feeling. Indeed, in a political system perspective, the major emphasis of contemporary metropolitan governance seems to reside on policy implementation, the 'output-side', whereas the 'input-side' of policy formulation - the main locus of democratic control - is put at distance. Hence, such uneasy feelings related to new metropolitan governance are frequently expressed by the fuzzy term 'democratic deficit' (Heinz 2000b).

However, it remains to be shown how new modes of metropolitan governance affect metropolitan politics empirically, and in what ways precisely they may be considered deficitarian with respect to democratic procedures. The aim of this workshop is to address this lacuna. More particularly, the reflection conducted in this workshop should be able to address five major questions:

1. **Do new modes of metropolitan governance relativise the weight of democratically elected bodies in the policy-making process?** Some observers think that the increasing role of non-government organisations in metropolitan governance may narrow the responsibilities exercised by formally elected bodies and make lines of accountability murky (King 1996; Deleon 1998). Others stress that networks of governance, where the main criterion for membership is technical know-how, lead to a technocratic style of policy-making, where elected bodies may increasingly lose grip (Gaudin 1995; 1996). And, according to research on structures of multi-level co-ordination, there is reason to think that networks associating public and private agencies from different state levels will lead to a disenfranchisement of parliaments and councils at all levels (Scharpf 1993; 1999).
2. **Do new modes of metropolitan governance foster the emergence of a metropolitan political elite?** Some scholars argue that there is a connection between the advent of new modes of metropolitan governance and a renewal of the local political elite (Jouve & Lefèvre 1999b; Jouve & Lefèvre 1999a; Lefèvre 1998). Indeed, it could be argued that functions in networks of metropolitan co-ordination create opportunities in terms of political influence and public visibility, that can be electorally capitalised. Hence, it is possible that the new modes of metropolitan governance favour the emergence of a new metropolitan political elite with a territorial scope that is different from the one of traditional local elites.

3. **Do new modes of metropolitan governance impede the creation of a metropolitan political identity among the citizenry?** As new modes of metropolitan governance are mainly structured by single policy issues, they are promoting sectoral ties between citizens and authorities rather than a stable territorial reference. There is thus reason to think that they may contribute to a fragmentation of the references by which the legitimate version of the common interest is identified and negotiated (Gaudin 1999), thereby affecting the conception of the citizen and the political community (Rose 1995; Duran & Theonig 1996). Hence, it could be argued that new modes of metropolitan governance contribute to a decline of citizen identification with the metropolitan area.

4. **Do new modes of metropolitan governance contribute to the emergence of a metropolitan civil society?** Drawing on the tenets of «associative democracy» (Hirst 1994; Cohen & Rogers 1992), it could be argued that the inclusion of non-government organisation and associations in metropolitan governance may be an important vector for an emerging metropolitan civic culture and a crucial question could be that of the institutional conditions to create participatory forms of metropolitan governance.

5. **Do new modes of metropolitan governance lead to new metropolitan spheres of deliberation?** According to some observers, interdependencies among actors and agencies involved in new modes of governance are such that, hierarchical modes of decision making are illusionary. This, in turn, may foster new spheres of negotiation and deliberation (Burns, Hambleton & Hoggett 1994; Donzelot & Estèbe 1994; Khan 1999). Hence, it could be argued that new modes of metropolitan governance lead to the emergence of deliberative metropolitan forums and respective forms of citizen involvement

### 3. Participants

The workshop is open to researchers whose work is relevant to the topic of metropolitan governance and metropolitan politics: scholars of public policy, public administration, urban and local politics or policy, local interest representation, local democracy, territorial reforms in urban areas, etc.

We would encourage participation of scholars from a wide range of geographical locations, as well as at different stages in their career (leading scholars, young researchers, PhD students).

### 4. Type of paper

Papers should deal with at least one of the five broad questions outlined above. We wish to attract papers dealing with aspects of metropolitan governance in various locations and countries. These could be:
- case studies on particular metropolitan areas, or on single policy fields within these;
- comparative research on metropolitan areas within or across countries and policy fields;
- research on elite structures or political identities in one or more metropolitan areas;
- theoretical works on the linkages between modes of governance and democratic politics in metropolitan areas.

5. Funding

In principle, workshop participants are expected to cover their own expenses according to ECPR guidelines.

However, follow-up meetings (e.g. for publication purposes), could be organised with the support of the research group «Politique et territoire» of the Swiss Political Science Association (co-directed by D. Kübler) and the study group «Lokale Politikforschung» of the German Political Science Association (co-directed by H. Heinelt). In this context a workshop on the topic "Metropolitan Governance" is already on the agenda of the german study group for 2002/2003. For such follow-up meetings, financial support could be solicited from the Swiss Association of Political Science, the Swiss National Science Foundation, as well as the Technische Universität Darmstadt.

Biographical note

Daniel Kübler was born in 1969 in Heidelberg (Germany). Specialised in public policy analysis, he obtained his PhD in Political Science from the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) in 1998, for which he was awarded the Faculty Prize in 1999. Since 1993, he is a research fellow at the Institut de recherche sur l'environnement construit of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne, and, since 2000, equally a research fellow at the Institut für Politikwissenschaft of the University of Zurich. In 1997, he has been a visiting researcher at the Centre comparatif d'études sur les politiques publiques et les espaces locaux (CEPEL) of the University of Montpellier (France). His current research focuses on the interactions between politics and policy implementation in the field of local drug policy, as well as on the impacts of new modes of metropolitan policy-making on democratic procedures in Switzerland. With respect to the latter, he is directing a research project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation on «Metropolitan governance and legitimacy: new territories of democracy in urban agglomerations». He is chair (together with Jean-Philippe Leresche, Andreas Ladner and Katja Horber-Papazian) of the research group «Politique et territoire» of the Swiss Political Science Association, and a member of the editorial committee of the Swiss Political Science Review. Recent publications relevant to the workshop theme include:


Drug-policy making in metropolitan areas: urban conflicts and governance. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* forthcoming in 2001 (together with Sonja Wälti)


*Hubert Heinelt*, born in 1952 in Wunstorf (Germany), is currently professor for public administration/public policy and urban studies at the Institut für Politikwissenschaft of the University of Darmstadt. He obtained his PhD on social policy from the University of Hannover in 1980, and a Habilitation for political science from the University of Hannover in 1990. His current research focuses on local policy and politics (involved in the UDITE Leadership Study with Poul Erik Mouritzen, Michael Goldsmith and others), on European integration and EU cohesion policy (two research projects on the historical development of the EU structural funds and the relation of the structural funds and national regional policies funded by the German Research Council and the Hans-Böckler-Foundation), as well as on issues of participatory governance (co-ordinator in the project «Achieving sustainable and innovative policies through participatory governance in a multi-level context» funded by the European Commission under the 5th framework programme). He is chair (together with Margrit Mayer) of the study group «Lokale Politikforschung» of the German Political Science Association, a member of the executive board of the European Urban Research Association (EURA), as well as chair of the executive board of the Schader-Foundation. Moreover, he is co-editor (with Bernhard Blanke, Roland Czada, Adrienne Héritier, Gerhard Lehmbruch and Mafred G. Schmidt) of the series *Gesellschaftspolitik und Staatsstätigkeit* of Leske & Budrich, Opladen. His recent publications, relevant to the workshop theme, include:

- *Brennpunkt Stadt. Stadtpolitik und lokale Politikforschung in den 80er und 90er Jahren* (Stadtforschung aktuell 31), Birkhäuser: Basel/Boston/Berlin 1991 (editor, together with Hellmut Wollmann)

- *Politik in europäischen Städten. Fallstudien zur Bedeutung lokaler Politik* (Stadtforschung aktuell 38), Birkhäuser: Basel/Boston/Berlin 1993 (editor, together with Margit Mayer)

- *Policy Networks and European Structural Funds. A Comparison between Member States*, Avebury: London 1996 (together with Randall Smith)


- Grenzen der kommunalen Arbeitsmarktpolitik, in: Krämer-Badoni/Petrowsky (Eds.): *Das Verschwinden der Städte*, Bremen 1997, S. 126-132


Capabilities for Action at the Local Level. in: Blanke/Smith (eds.): Cities in Transition, Macmillan: Basingstoke/London 1999, S. 199-214 (together with Nicola Staeck)

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References


