Working Paper

Thilo Lang

Insights in the British Debate about Urban Decline and Urban Regeneration*

Preface

This working-paper represents work-in-progress research findings. The intention of the author is to share the gained knowledge about urban decline and its causes as well as urban regeneration with a wider public. It is not intended to present a holistic and totally comprehensive piece of work. The paper is meant to be a summary of relevant scientific debates in Great Britain in the mentioned fields.

1. Processes of transformation and decline

Every town and city is affected by trends of transformation, by processes of (structural) change. Some cities and economies can adapt without problems to these developments whilst in others, structural change initiates more or less deep crises due to its variegated impact on all aspects of urban development. Some cities might be characterised by extreme difficulties of adaptation and might experience dramatic impacts such as the loss of a huge part of their population (Cheshire, Hay 1989: 10).

Many social problems (e.g. increasing social disparities, decreasing average wage levels, social conflicts, diminishing social standards etc.) are directly caused by economic decline. Furthermore, people of working age tend to define themselves by their work and their role in business-life. "In modern societies, having a job is important for sustaining self-esteem" (Giddens et. al. 2005: 415). Several characteristics of work appear to be relevant when it comes to its importance for self-identity: the provision of a wage or salary, activity level and change from domestic surroundings, temporal structure of everyday life and social contacts. Consequently, the means of a particular region to provide employment for the local and regional population is seen as crucial for urban development.

The term 'decline' in the context of urban development is used to describe undesirable changes, such as job losses accompanied by growing unemployment, social exclusion, physical decay and worsening living conditions (cf. Medhurst, Lewis 1969: 2). From the 1960s many European towns and cities were facing long-term decline that was „characterised particularly by population and employment loss with a net out-migration of population, firms and activities. Linked to these two major factors has been physical and social decline" (Noon et al 2000: 63).

Urban decline is a social problem, intensely related to normative considerations of the desirable and the undesirable within the general attitude towards cities. It also depends on the intensity of processes and their impacts if these are considered to perform decline. Beauregard notes that "just because a city has fewer residents and fewer jobs does not mean that it is experiencing decline; the issue is the composition of those changes, their pace and the resultant distribution of costs and benefits" (Beauregard 1993: 36f). If losses in employment and population are of an enduring nature over a period of a couple of years and take place in a pace that does not allow continuous adaptation[1], it is very likely that these problems and their impacts are associated with urban decline.

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[1] In terms of employment this means that the loss of employment (in full-time equivalent jobs) leads to problems at the local labour-market and to social exclusion or deprivation. An enduring loss of population at a higher pace means that e.g. physical problems occur due to housing areas of low demand and the adaptation of infrastructure would cause problems as well.

A simplified description of urban decline is to perceive it as a reduction of local and regional employment in parallel with a loss of population. Indeed, the loss of both, employment and population seems to be characteristic of urban decline (Cheshire, Hay 1989: 31f). More precisely "for the purpose of studying urban decline [...] especially in the context of industrial decline, systematic data on both decentralisation and net loss of employment and on its changing structure in relation to decentralisation, appear to be most important" (EC 1986: 4). The analysis of processes and their impacts on the main fields of urban development in Germany (Lang, Tenz 2003) underlines the importance of both demographic development (in terms of population development) and economic development (in terms of employment and reasonable unemployment-figures) when it comes to describing decline. Earlier descriptions of decline often focus only on demographic indicators. However, there is no complete theory of urban decline and there are many differing definitions. The definition adopted here acknowledges the importance of both demographic and economic processes as reasons for urban problems:

Decline at the urban level can be best described in terms of a continuous reduction of employment as well as an enduring loss of population; both processes are interrelating and are accompanied by rising social and physical problems. Often these processes are reflected on a regional level, indicating a regional dimension of causes and impacts.

All towns and cities constantly face a need to adapt to changing conditions. Localities are not static settings or scenes but dynamic socially constructed places (cf. Healey et al. 1995: 1ff). They are made of social interaction and perceptions as well as the interrelation with internal and external impetuses. Thus, they are always changing. Of course there might be a "normal" pace of change which would not call for huge measures of adaptation. The processes associated with urban growth and urban decline, however, pose particular challenges to urban planning and urban development to adapt. Dealing with growth might be easier for the relevant disciplines, because there is a longer tradition in handling growth. Dealing with urban decline is the newer problem and still leaves a lot of questions unanswered. It is the broad area of this study.

The official ODPM[2] document on urban policy doesn't really define, what is seen as decay and decline. However, in a regional level, it refers to the position of the European Union and addresses regions which are legging behind (ODPM 2003: A17). That means a lower GDP per capita as the average of the European Union. Concerning urban areas the ODPM-document says that „the types of market and social failures addressed by 3R interventions are typically persistent. They may occur as a result of an area entering a self-reinforcing spiral of decline, which the area itself does not have the ability to correct." (ODPM 2003: A56)

Although „decay" is not really defined, it is a word, that „conjures up a multitude of unpleasant images, and writers about towns have used it to describe very many different states of affaires, having little in common except some implication of an undesirable change. Sometimes the emphasis is on the physical decay of buildings. At other times it is on the declining attractiveness of the environment, the disappearance of activity, the growth of „undesirable" activity or even the quality of its administration." (Medhurst, Lewis 1969: 2) The terms of „market and social failures" resp. „economic, social and physical decay" or „decline"

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[2] Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (responsible authority for regeneration).

are used quite synonymously and describe undesirable changes as well like job losses accompanied by an over average percentage of unemployed, more socially excluded resp. social segregation, concentrating in deprived areas with physical decay and worse living conditions or quality of life.

2. Causes of decline

There is no single cause for all urban problems. Forces of a different nature influence urban decline and urban (economic) development. Most studies of urban change, decay or decline concentrate on the consequences of urban transformation rather than their underlying causes. "The end result is that most theories of urban change provide only a partial insight into what is a complex process" (Roberts 2000: 21). A lot of research stresses negative demographic and social trends and the causal role of economic factors particularly (Robson 1988: 58ff; Cheshire, Hay 1989: 36ff; Roberts 2000: 23ff, EC 1986: 11):

- (international) industrial restructuring in pursuit of maximising returns including de-industrialisation;

- globalisation and economic concentration as forces for economic structural change,

- the problems of adapting to new demands of economic activities and factor constraints (including the availability of land and buildings).

The ways in which towns, cities and regions are affected by structural change differ greatly. The main reason for this research is the structure and the characteristics of the local economy. If the local economy is dominated by big industrial firms it depends upon how advanced production is. If products are still new, innovation plays a vital role and if jobs are mainly in the skilled or high-skilled level, risks for the local economy are quite low. More labour-intensive and heavy industries bear the biggest risk of economic decline in European urban areas. Thus, in particular, the older industrial cities are affected by decline as a result of de-industrialisation (Cheshire, Hay 1997: 3f). But also generally processes of globalisation have fuelled constant pressure on industrial firms by shortened product life cycles and tightened (global) competition (Conti 1997: 19).

According to product-life-cycle theories there is a general sequence of products: initial development, growth, maturity, decline and obsolescence. The early stages of the product life cycle – initial development and growth – are said to be closely linked to developed and urbanised regions. This is due to the fact that the innovative phase of product development needs highly qualified employees and venture capital. Both are more likely to be found in agglomerations. At the end of the product's life-cycle (with mass-production and broad competition) production tends to move to less-developed regions in order to take advantage of lower labour and capital costs (Malizia, Feser 1999: 178). Every stage of production has its own location. The first stages are rather labour-intensive with highly educated staff, the last stages rather space-extensive with low level industrial workers.

In this way the development of a town or a region can be well connected to the development of a certain industry or industrial cluster. If the main field of economic activity of a town or a region is to be found at the end of product life-cycles socio-economic problems are more likely to occur. If the local economy is mono-structured or even depending on only one industry the chances of getting in trouble and impediments to adaptation are very high

(Cheshire, Hay 1989). Economic problems in one field cannot be levelled out by other economic activities.

In an institutional perspective mono-structured regions often show well established social and economic inter-personal and inter-organisational networks which make it difficult to develop alternatives while actors of the particular field still dominate local institutional structures and proceedings (Grabher 1993). Such processes are often referred to as functional, cognitive or political 'lock-in'.

3. Globalisation and deepening disparities

In recent decades and in particular after the fall of the iron curtain, economic activities have become more and more global (Amin, Thrift 1994: 2ff). For companies, it became easier to re-locate labour-intensive parts of the production process to countries with cheaper labour-costs. Nowadays, each part of the production process, from the product's initial formation, research and development to its eventual mass-production, may take place in that part of the world where it is most profitable (Cheshire 1998: 110f). This means that especially in the production sector there is a constant demand for rationalisation – and resulting job-losses. In certain lines of business, enterprises cannot contend anymore with the global competition and have to move production to other countries or close down their activities (Schelte 1999: 16f).

More generally, there is a recognised shift from an economic base with the majority of employees working in the industrial sector to an economy based on the service sector with a growth of service occupations and resulting different requirements to the labour market. This process takes place to the disadvantage of some, mostly old-industrialised regions, showing difficulties of adapting to such changing contexts. In these regions, economic transformation has lead to economic slowdown and job losses. This was especially the case when their economic profile was linked to labour-intensive manufacturing or "old" industries of the industrial revolution as textiles, steel, mining or shipbuilding (e.g. BBR 2005, Stöhr 1990, Cheshire, Hay 1989; Häußermann, Siebel 1987).

In Western Europe, there is a strong connection between writings about urban decline and economic restructuring in old-industrialised regions. After sometimes radical processes of transformation associated with the term de-industrialisation, high-skilled and service jobs have more and more dominated local labour markets whereas classical production-line manufacturing jobs play a steadily decreasing role. Despite a continuous general growth in service sector industries, in many of these city-regions an increase in service-sector employment has not adequately compensated for the corresponding decrease in other sectors, above all manufacturing (Cheshire, Hay 1989: 6; for East-Germany: Lang, Tenz 2003: 28).

In the globalised economy, only a few global cities and metropolitan regions are said to be the "control points of the global economic system" (Dickens 2003: 240, 464). Within the international system "networked" cities and agglomerations (especially capital cities), are said to be the number one location for headquarters of multinational companies and big national enterprises or subcontractors, in particular in the financial sector. Current processes of internationalisation and global inter- and intra-firm relations tend to concentrate much of

the world's most important trading activities in a relatively limited number of sub-national regions or agglomerations (Scott, Storper 2003; Beaverstock, Smith, Taylor 1999).

Such tendencies are likely to promote concentrated economic and demographic development in some metropolitan regions, which thereby dominate national urban systems. There is a selective concentration of growth potentials in a smaller number of regions (Krätke 1990: 7). Amin and Thrift suggest that capital cities and core metropolitan regions can derive competitive advantage from the presence of many institutions of governance in economic, political and cultural life (Amin, Thrift 1995: 105). Private investment concentrates in regions with extensive infrastructure networks, a high density of human capital and economic networks, clients and contractors, knowledge institutions and professional services – again the metropolitan regions.

Indeed, the contemporary tendency towards large globally networked city-regions combined with the turn towards neo-liberal policy measures in many European nations parallels widening gaps between sub-national regions, measured for example in income inequalities (Scott, Storper 2003: 585). Some towns, cities and regions have difficulties to find their role in the changing economy and may experience an imbalance of demographic and economic development, sometimes leading to economic slowdown and to an increase in social problems and social disparities associated with urban decline (EC 1986). Some regions in Western Europe have become more peripheral in terms of social and economic development and have lost advantage while others have closed the gaps to the economically leading European regions (Cheshire, Hay 1989). Certain regions lose well-educated people because of job shortages or unattractive living- and working-conditions, while other regions become magnets for national and international immigration, offering better job opportunities, particularly for highly qualified professionals. It is quite evident that some cities and regions can be characterised demographically in terms of stagnation or decline while others experience new phases of growth. In terms of economic development the evidence suggests that particular regions with a concentration of research and development activities and organisations can benefit in terms of economic development (Cheshire 1998: 106, 123). Both observations suggest that there is increased divergence in the European urban system.

Deepening regional disparities are seen as a major feature of current globalisation (Krätke 1990). At the same time the capacity of the relevant system of regional or urban governance[3] to improve the situation and reduce the related problems or to attract new functions when old functions are lost is difficult to develop. Such a capacity would be closely linked to a general adaptive capacity of the urban or city-regional socio-economic structure (Cheshire, Hay 1989: 5ff).

Small and medium-sized towns outside of agglomerations cannot compete with the advantages of big cities (e.g. in the fields of research and development, education, available labour-force, technical infrastructure, national and international transport systems). They obtain less attention from investors and politicians despite being important as small centres of economic, cultural and social life for their hinterland. Thus, they have different preconditions for urban and economic development than big cities and city-regions. They

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[3] Despite affecting the whole region it is usually the dominating core where response is expected in terms of urban governance. Logically it would be the regional level to allocate strategies and policies to catch up or level out disparities between different national regions. However, at least in England and even more in Germany, the relevant power is more often to be found on or allocated to the local level.

require another type of economic and urban development and different solutions to problems of decline.

In economic development, it is said that innovation and learning has a distinctive geography linked to agglomeration and industrial clusters (Scott, Storper 2003: 582f). Additionally, current processes of globalisation seem to favour just a few metropolitan regions within the national state to the disadvantage of some others (Krätke 1990: 7; Amin, Thrift 1995: 105; Scott, Storper 2003).

Effects of de-industrialisation or rationalisation might be more dramatic in small industrial towns than in old industrial agglomerations. The social and economic impacts of a small town losing one branch plant as its main employer can be worse than in a larger old-industrial region. Economic networks in small towns tend to be smaller and dependencies upon a few big firms more intense. Additionally, the dependence on one local industry might have generated conditions that suppressed small-scale entrepreneurship. Another factor is that in particular in old industrial small towns outside the metropolitan regions the development of higher education organisations has typically been rather poor but such organisations are necessary to provide access to new ideas, technologies and skills (Cheshire, Hay 1989: 10). Also the smaller labour market would offer less opportunities for those who lost their jobs. The extensive agglomeration advantages and the forms of infrastructure in metropolitan regions, usually with good access to motorway-networks, high speed rail, airports, telecommunication hubs and good qualification offers as well as a concentration of research and development facilities, are generally absent in small towns. The possibilities to develop knowledge institutions and economic networks is seen as inherent to big cities but lacking in small towns.

Smaller towns outside of agglomerations might have advantages which could possibly outweigh the economic advantages of metropolitan regions or agglomerations. They would be on another level, however. For example the local culture of small towns including social patterns of interaction are typically very different to those in big cities. This again could lead to a different relation to change. More generally, the potential future role of deindustrialised small towns outside of agglomerations has not been subject to much research activity as yet. So far, there is little to find about particular small town potentials and their utilisation for a specific small town economy.

Small towns are seen as particularly interesting in terms of social capital formation and institutional networking in an environment in which there is a manageable number of actors. Urban governance under circumstances of few material resources but different characteristics of social structures might open up new perspectives in urban development. Furthermore small towns or rural centres are undoubtedly important for a balanced settlement structure and regional development.
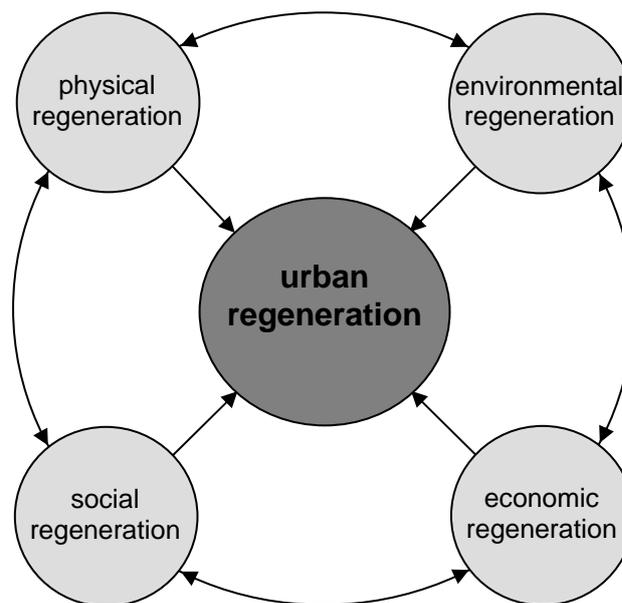
4. Urban Regeneration

Local policies and strategies designed to deal with urban decline, decay or transformation, are termed urban regeneration. Urban regeneration implies an integrated perspective on problems, potentials, strategies and projects within the social, environmental, cultural and economic sphere. Urban regeneration is a normative concept and rooted in British urban policy.

Urban regeneration can be defined as a „comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change" (Roberts 2000: 17).

The official definition in a sense of governmental understanding is the following: Regeneration is „the holistic process of reversing economic, social and physical decay in areas where it has reached a stage when market forces alone will not suffice" (ODPM 2003: A156). Regeneration is therefore one of three areas of governmental activity with strong spatial focus: The so-called 3R-interventions are regeneration (urban and rural regeneration), renewal and regional development. The more important question then is, what is seen as economic, social and physical decay and where do interventions concentrate on in a spatial perspective?

Urban regeneration thereby moves beyond urban renewal (a process of essentially physical change), urban development (general mission) and urban revitalisation (no precise method of approach). Urban regeneration implies that all approaches „should be constructed with a longer-term, more strategic purpose in mind" (Roberts 2000: 18). The need for a general strategic agenda and cross-sector integration are seen as central features of urban regeneration.

Fig. 1:   The Concept of Urban Regeneration

According to the biological meaning of regeneration, Couch and Fraser explain that urban „regeneration is concerned with the re-growth of economic activity where it has been lost; the restoration of social function where there has been dysfunction, or social inclusion where there has been exclusion; and the restoration of environmental quality or ecological balance where it has been lost" (Couch, Fraser 2003: 2). This approach goes well beyond efforts to put vacant land and buildings to new use. Urban regeneration is about implementing policies in existing urban areas rather than developing new urbanisation. It aims to build upon the triangle of sustainability, with its commitment to economic, social and environmental problems and developments.

While renewal is used to describe actions on a quarter-level that address neighbourhoods and housing estates as a reaction on deprivation, regeneration addresses inner city areas, areas facing imbalance and decline as well as rural areas (ODPM 2003: 6f). More precisely urban regeneration is "addressing the problems of inner city areas and other similar areas facing problems of imbalance and decline (e.g. as defined in planning documents - regeneration zones, seaside towns, market towns, former coalfield areas, etc.), but also aiming at improving the confidence of private investors in areas in transition" (ODPM 2003: A18). So urban regeneration is seen as a reaction on decay, decline and spatial imbalance in urban areas while rural regeneration is „addressing problems of decline and structural change" in smaller settlements (ODPM 2003: A18).

Neighbourhood renewal is set in an integrated perspective as well and focuses among other aims „on improving work and business opportunity for the local residents" (ODPM 2003: A15). Totally Renewal is defined as „improvement in the situation of the most disadvantaged places and their communities, including the level and quality of the services they receive. Renewal objectives may be wide ranging but will seek to deliver improved work and business opportunities, improved residential attractiveness and improved public services." (ODPM 2003: A156).

To understand the objective of urban regeneration in Britain, it is necessary to understand the development of urban policy in the UK, in which most writers refer to Stöhr (1989) and Lichfield (1992). Urban Regeneration describes the recent stage in an evolution of urban policy since 1945 as an integrated urban interventionary policy. Urban regeneration is seen as a step forward from the commercial style of the Redevelopment policy in the 1980s, where the Conservative government „has consciously imitated the American strategy of relying on private market mechanisms rather than upon public intervention to revitalise its cities and urban areas." (Parkinson, Judd 1988: 1) Roberts (2000) describes the policy until the 1950s as Reconstruction (of post war Britain). The emphasis was on repairing war-time damage and further on replacement and the eradication of the physical problems of the past. The Revitalisation-policy of the 1960s continued the old policy but with growing influence of private investment and the introduction of the regional level in activities. 1970s Renewal was concentrating on particular areas and could not stop developments at the periphery. By the 1990's it was accepted that the traditional (physical) focus of finance, enterprise, housing and commercial development was not enough. It was recognised that interventions had to be „part of a framework of strategies including health, childcare, safety, education and training, environmental sustainability, the arts and culture, and other quality of life issues – in other words, an integration of the economic, social and environmental aspects in a comprehensive approach." (BURA 1997) The wider understanding of policy-matters required a more intensive institutional exchange and led to a growing role of multi-sector partnerships (Carter 2000).

Roberts sets out, in which sense urban regeneration has to be understood as an integrative approach of economic, social and physical matters. He illustrates, that the history of urban problems and opportunities shows five continuous and enduring themes, that represent the nature of urban change plus a new one (Roberts 2000: 10ff):

1. the relationship between physical conditions and social response,

2. the continued need for the physical replacement of many elements of the urban fabric,

3. the importance of economic success as a foundation for urban prosperity and quality of life,

4. the need to make the best possible use of urban land and to avoid unnecessary sprawl and

5. the importance of recognising that urban policy mirrors the dominant social conventions and political forces of the day plus

6. the new theme of sustainable development.

These six themes and the analysis of the discussion in the 1990s build the base for the in comparison to the ODPM-definition more carefully formulated initial definition from Peter Roberts (2000: 17): Urban regeneration is a „comprehensive and integrated vision and action which leads to the resolution of urban problems and which seeks to bring about a lasting improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area that has been subject to change." Urban regeneration thereby moves beyond urban renewal (process of essentially physical change), urban development (general mission) and urban revitalisation (no precise method of approach). Urban regeneration implies that any approach „should be constructed with a longer-term, more strategic purpose in mind" (Roberts 2000: 18). The need of a general strategic agenda and integration are seen as the central features of urban regeneration. Roberts identifies a number of principles as the hallmark of urban regeneration. The most important are that urban regeneration should:

- be based upon a detailed analysis of the condition of an urban area,

- be aimed at the simultaneous adaptation of the physical fabric, social structures, economic base and environmental condition of an urban area,

- attempt to achieve this task through a comprehensive and integrated strategy with a clearly articulated vision that deals with the resolution of problems in a balanced, ordered and positive manner (see also Carter 2000),

- ensure that the strategy and the resulting programmes are developed in accord with the terms of sustainable development,

- set clear operational objectives, which should wherever possible be quantified,

- make the best possible use of natural, eonomic, human and other resources, including land and existing features of the built environment,

- seek to ensure consensus through the fullest possible participation and co-operation

- measure the progress of strategy towards the achievement of objectives and monitor the changing nature and influence of the internal and external forces which act upon urban areas

There can't be one explicit, closely defined guidance for urban regeneration because of the uniqueness of place. Each urban area is different, influenced by a variety of impacts and has to be seen in the wider context in which it is located. Any model of urban regeneration has to be adapted to the circumstances within which it operates. Roberts, however, grouped the outputs of urban regeneration actions into five categories: neighbourhood strategies, economic development, training and education, physical improvements and environmental action. Regeneration can therefore be seen more as an interventionist activity or a means of mobilising collective effort as well as of determining policies and actions designed to improve

the condition of urban areas and developing the necessary institutional structures (Roberts 2000: 20ff). A strategic agenda for the process of urban regeneration therefore should

- create clarity regarding the intended outcomes of regeneration,

- provide a framework for specific plans and projects

- establish and maintain links between the policy-systems involved

- identify the roles and responsibilities of the actors involved

- generate a sense of common purpose and co-operation.

In contrast to private sector led redevelopment, urban regeneration points out, that it should reduce social exclusion and enhance the economic reintegration of disadvantaged urban areas (McGregor, McConnachie 1995), what means urban regeneration should aim at reducing segregation as well. The renaissance of american and british cities since the 1970s led to an uneven share of prosperity, what expressed itself in social, economic and spatial segregation (Parkinson, Judd 1988: 5). In the recent urban regeneration practice, therefore is an emphasis on integrated actions, combining social, economic and environmental issues (Roberts 2000: 22). Although the environmental sphere is seen as very important as well, the following study concentrates on an integration of social and economic strategies of urban regeneration.

The European Commission recognised already in 1994 (EC 1994) that spatial planning shifted from pure physical planning and land-use matters to an integrated concern of economic, social, environmental and political issues. The challenge is to integrate those various issues into a more comprehensive and complex form of urban planning. Analysis about the processes of urban decline in East German towns and cities made clear that urban change and urban decline is a very complex process with strong interactions and both, reasons and impacts in the economic, social and environmental sphere of planning (Lang, Tenz 2003). In this sense also urban regeneration has to be an integrated strategic approach. However especially social planning and economic regeneration are usually handled separately. Economic regeneration is seen mainly as a bundle of measures to support the economic sector. However, it should at the same time be seen as a possibility to bring unemployed people back to work and to improve urban areas at all or at least not to contradict other objectives of urban regeneration. Economic regeneration has to be more than investments in infrastructure and the supply of land. „There must also be investment in people with increased and appropriate training and support for ideas" (Noon et al 2000: 62). This investment in people has to be in the disadvantaged areas, right there where social and economic problem concentrate. Investment in people means also to work with people.

5. Socio-economic aspects in Regeneration

In recent years, the understanding of spatial planning in Europe has broadened from a focus on pure physical planning and land-use matters to include more integrated approaches which address economic, social, environmental, and political issues (EC 1994). At about the same time European comparative research revealed that purely growth oriented development strategies have not only failed to induce social and environmental benefits as expected, but in some cases economic growth strategies have even deepened social and environmental problems (EC 1992: 24). It is, however, still a challenge for local actors to apply this

knowledge to create a more comprehensive and complex form of urban planning. Studies of the process of urban decline in East German towns and cities clearly reveal that urban change and decline is characterised by extremely complex processes. There are strong interactions and both reasons for and impacts of these processes in the economic and social sphere of planning (Lang, Tenz 2003).

Regeneration should be seen as a multi-dimensional and multi-faceted process, aimed at improving the quality of the urban fabric and the natural environment as well as reconstructing the local economy. Issues such as social inclusion are seen as central to the regeneration agenda (Bennett, Beynon, Hudson 2000: 45). Consequently, this study concentrates on an integration of social and economic strategies of urban regeneration. Urban regeneration emphasises the reduction of social exclusion and the economic reintegration of disadvantaged urban areas (McGregor, McConnachie 1995).

In the day to day practices of municipalities however, social planning and economic regeneration are often handled separately. Economic regeneration is regarded as the province of a set of independent measures designed to support the economy. The practice of economic regeneration has often been criticised, as it is usually not seen as an opportunity to bring unemployed people back to work (TU Berlin 1994) and because economic development promotion as such concentrates on investments in infrastructure and the supply of land (Röpke 2004). Investment in people, through increased support for and provision of appropriate training and support for the realisation of entrepreneurial ideas, is regarded as under-represented in local economic regeneration practices (Noon et al 2000: 62).

The economy is a social construct (cf. Swedberg, Granovetter 1992), shaped and created by human beings, influencing the development of towns, cities and regions. Most behaviour of individuals in the firm or in economic development as well as in urban planning is closely embedded in interpersonal relations and social interaction (Granovetter 1985). There is a very heavy impact of social structure on economic outcomes e.g. in terms of cooperation, the functioning of labour markets, price levels of suppliers, productivity, and innovation (cf. Granovetter 2005). Thus, the economy cannot be viewed in isolation, but must be seen as part of a overarching social structure for two main reasons:

(1) the firm and economic activity are the creation of human decision; the inclusion of the firm and of economic activity in formal and informal institutional structures and networks means that the economy is socially constructed;

(2) economic change and transformation does not only effect technical processes, profits or products but also has social effects, such as changing demands on the constitution of and demand for labour.

Consequently, economic development cannot be regarded merely as a quantitative process simply explained as economic growth measured in terms of change of Gross Domestic Product or change in surplus or profits. An appropriate understanding of economic development would also include qualitative aspects such as qualification and innovation as well as social indicators such as numbers of employees and unemployed. Regeneration policies intend to promote social and economic development. However, there is enough evidence that economic growth per se does not automatically contribute to economic and social development and well-being. A neoliberal understanding of development processes and resulting policies appears to be misleading, when the basic assumption is that economic

growth inevitably leads to greater equality, participation and services for a growing part of the population by providing higher levels of production and income (Hodgson et al 1994: 139ff).

Economic transformation, from an industrial to post-industrial society, often leads to the marginalisation, if not the complete exclusion, of large parts of the population. Thus, regeneration measures are more likely to be successful if they incorporate social aims. Socio-economic regeneration is seen as a crucial aspect of urban regeneration (cf. McGregor and McConnachie 1995).

Fig. 2: The Concept of Socio-economic Regeneration
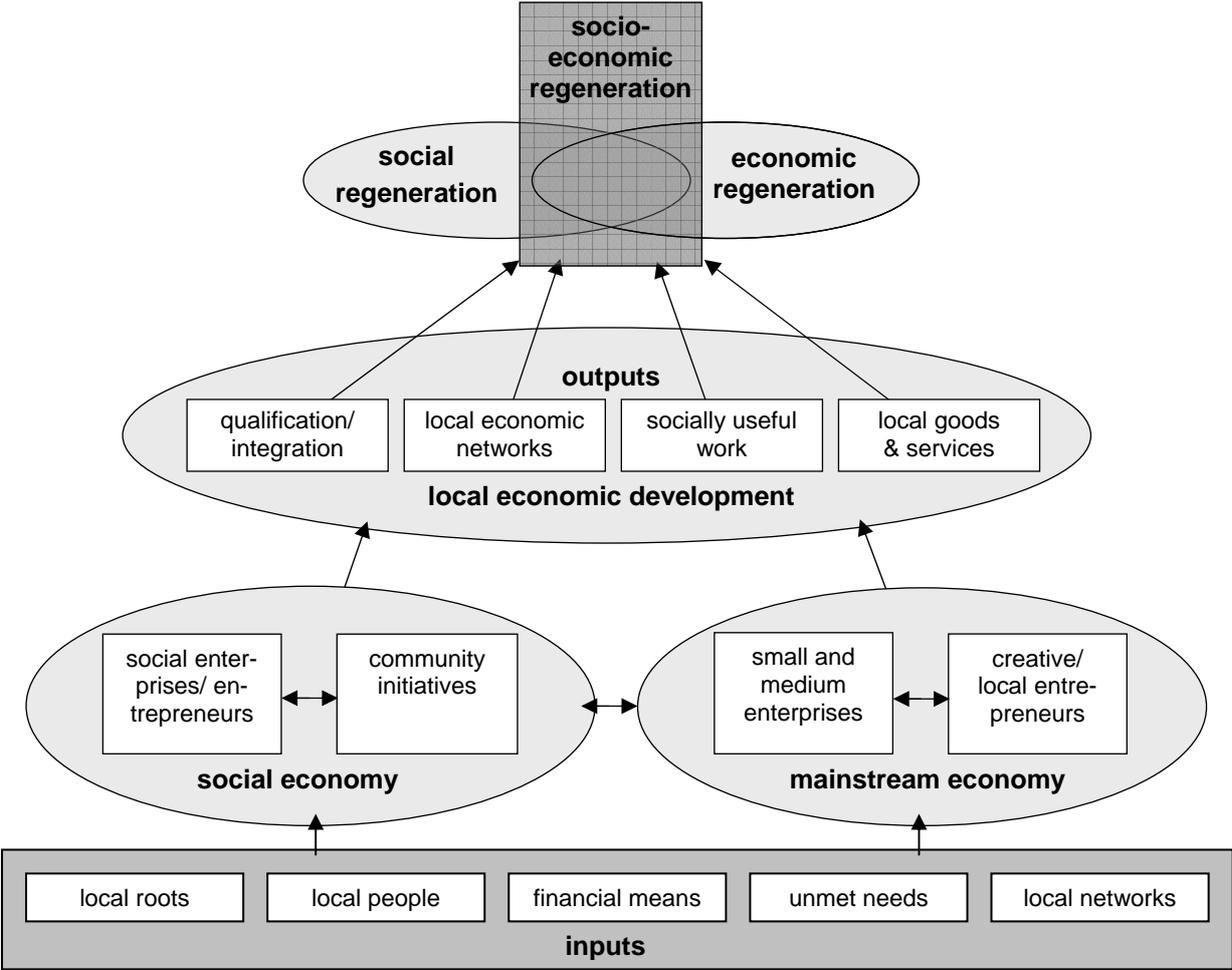
Socio-economic regeneration, by pursuing sustainable economic and social development, endeavours to maintain locally rooted economic structures, to foster social stability (in terms of social and economic integration of local communities) and to reduce social and economic disparities. Measures of socio-economic regeneration consist of integrated strategies and concrete projects.

This understanding of socio-economic regeneration is intentionally quite broad, in order to include attempts of regeneration which directly and indirectly follow social aims of integration, qualification and the provision of local jobs.

6. Responses in urban governance to changing conditions

The ways in which and forms through which cities are governed have been subject to change in most European states over the last 15 years, in some west European countries

considerably longer. In the last couple of years in Germany and Britain new elements were introduced to the urban political scene, requiring, encouraging or fostering elements of partnership and cooperation to achieve regeneration (cf. 4.). In addition, traditional forms of local government with hierarchical and state centred forms of decision making are said to be more and more replaced by less hierarchical multi-actor approaches to urban management. The role of the local state has become less rigorous and less authoritarian while at the same time opening up towards other actors. New forms of governance and partnership have been changing power relations and responsibilities for service provision. Policy making is said to increasingly include private and other actors traditionally not concerned with urban management. This does not mean that local government has lost importance. On the contrary, it can be said that the role of government has become increasingly significant in terms of local democracy (cf. Elander, Blanc 2001). In most forms of urban governance local government is still the only body with legal authority that can decide about urban issues.

It is the intention of this section to identify the analytical changes in the urban political scene.[4] The debate about urban governance is framed by a strong British perspective which might pose restrictions to the issues discussed. Also empirical research concentrates very much on British and North American examples (Gissendanner 2004: 46). The notion that over the last decades, "elected local governments have fragmented organisationally, public-private boundaries have become more blurred and new political actors have emerged" (Lowndes 2001: 1954) is in particular true for the UK context, where cross-sectoral partnerships have been taking the leading role in urban development policy. There is no common state of governance research nor a common theory of urban governance in Europe. Most of the questions related to governance are still open for discussion.[5] Urban governance cannot be seen as one particular established way of regulation or steering. It is more like a collective name or container for a broad range of different approaches to deal with urban development.

If governance is perceived as a general phenomenon, what are the differences between particular forms, discourses and practices of urban governance? There have been efforts to classify and categorise different forms or modes of governance (DiGaetano, Strom 2003, Pierre 1999, DiGaetano, Lawless 1999). These existing typologies are based on a limited empirical basis and have to be seen and used with due caution. They might, however, illustrate some ways governance has changed over the last decades.

The character of particular forms, models or modes of urban governance on the local level is more than the output of different formal settings. It is said to be mainly shaped by informal arrangements and collective understandings (DiGaetano, Strom 2003: 365ff) or systems of values, norms, beliefs, and practices (Pierre 1999: 375). It might also include the motivation of governance in terms of policy agendas. The motivation or basic ideology is held to be important in the governance context because it can be seen as the main driver for change (Hinnfors 1999). DiGaetano and Lawless (1999: 550) placed emphasis on the motivation for

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[4] A lot of writings about governance, however, contain hidden claims or normative descriptions of governance. In this research the analytical results in governance research are put central. As there is no theory of urban governance, the analytical shifts (which by far cannot be regarded as being everywhere the same) and in particular their impacts and motivations are still regarded as an open question.

[5] The strong British perspective in urban governance research might place some limitations in terms of the appliance of empirical findings to a German context. It is acknowledged that the differing nature of the national context in Germany and Great Britain also leads to different ways and characteristics of local agency and urban governance. However, as it has been argued earlier in this study, the results of the current governance research presented here are perceived as open for discussion. There is by far no completed theory of urban governance. The current findings at best can help to better understand the German context and ask further questions.

different modes of governance. Their findings from a long term study about governing structure and policy in Birmingham, Sheffield and Detroit point to at least four different agendas shaping local settings and procedures of urban governance:

- pro growth agendas (encourage public infrastructure development and private investment);

- social reform agendas (redistributing resources e.g. in terms of affordable housing, job training and community service);

- caretaker agendas (confined to routine service provision such as police, fire, health; little or no effort to achieve socio-economic change) and

- growth management.

Analysing the motivations and the prime objectives of specific urban governance constellations helps to identify some reasons for changes in the urban political scene. Such a procedure is, however, incomplete as it does not give any account about how governance changed and about the particular form of process-based governance. Reviewing research about how governance can differ also opens up new viewpoints for the underlying research and helps to better understand the results of this study.

Fig. 3: Models of urban governance (Pierre 1999)

	Managerial	Corporatist	Progrowth	Welfare
Objectives	Enhancing efficiency of services	Distribution (public services and policies)	Economic growth	Redistribution and state funding
Instruments	Contracts	Negotiation	Partnerships	Networks
Key participants	Managers of public service organisations	Civic leaders, politicians	Economic elite, senior officials	government officials and bureaucrats
Nature of public-private exchange	Competitive	Concerted	Interactive	Restrictive
Local state – citizen relationship	Exclusive	Inclusive	Exclusive	Inclusive
Key evaluative criterion	Efficiency	Participation	Growth	Equity

Highlighting overarching objectives, main instruments employed to attain these objectives, key participants, institutional relationships and evaluation criteria, Pierre (1999) suggests a typology of governance based on objectives and governing structures (Fig. 3).[6]

Pierre understands governance as a process[7] "blending and coordinating public and private interests" (Pierre 1999: 374) and roots his notions in literature about Western European governance. He reduces the varieties in urban governance to four general models: managerial, corporatist, progrowth and welfare governance. Such models of governance are ideal types, rarely if ever existing in reality and thus quite hypothetical. In practice it would be

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[6] The typology along governing structures of DiGaetano and Strom 2003 appears to be similarly interesting. It is, however, a bit more complex than Pierre's models and does not serve the intention to demonstrate variation in urban governance.
[7] I do not share Pierre's conception of governance as process. The definition adopted here is more basic and places emphasis on the general approach to urban development with public and private actors involved (cf. 2.1.).

likely that governance would incorporate aspects of more than one model. Within the city as organisation there might be different models of governance, existing side-by-side in a multi-organisational and fragmented structure, more likely to lead to conflict within the city administration about competing models (Pierre 1999: 377, 388).

Pierre's typology (Fig. 2) illustrates how diverse the landscape of governance appears to be in Western Europe. Different forms of governance might lead to different relations between public and private actors, different instruments and different key participants. What is also obvious when looking at this typology is that there cannot be success of urban governance in general. If the motivation for urban governance as well as the applied instruments, relevant actors and evaluative criteria can be so diverse, the identification of success would be similarly diverse. There cannot be a particular set of features guaranteed to make each local mode of governance successful. Success can only be measured in relation to the concrete case.

7. Partnerships

Partnerships are discussed as a recent approach or as a particular approach in urban governance and one possible answer to changing conditions in urban development. What is most interesting in the context of this study about partnerships is the participatory meaning of the integration of stakeholders in urban governance (cf. Davies 2001) and the strategic context of their collaboration.[8] In Britain, new partnership arrangements have been intensely promoted by the national state and were in particular linked to urban regeneration (Bailey 1995: 38ff; 1). In Germany, the partnership approach lacks a long history as in Britain, but in recent years, there has been an ongoing trend towards more cooperative instead of hierarchical elements in German urban policy (e.g. in terms of contractual arrangements, the introduction of informal planning instruments such as regional development concepts or the requirement for integrated urban development concepts in East Germany).[9] Moreover, the European Union has promoted the partnership approach, for example in programmes such as Leader, Urban, or Interreg for the development of rural regions, depressed urban areas or interregional cooperation (Geddes 1998: 29-39; Elander, Blanc 2001: 105f).[10]

In economic development, for both, firms and the local state, partnerships have become increasingly important (Kearns, Paddison 2000: 847). Firms engage for better urban environments and the better functioning of the urban and economic system. In many European countries the local state supports partnerships to achieve better overall economic performance. Cooperation in new forms of urban governance ideally leads to a win-win situation for all included partners. Each partner invests time in cooperation and agrees to a certain loss of autonomy to come to a better overall functioning of the system (cf. Jessop 1998: 35f). Partnerships between public and private actors in particular in the field of economic development seem to reflect these principles. Such partnership arrangements have become increasingly prevalent at a city level since the early 1980s all over western

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[8] The purchaser-provider contract in the context of this study does not play a central role as does the inter-organisational public-public collaboration.
[9] Cf. §13 Raumordnungsgesetz (suggesting regional development concepts in cooperation with public and private actors), §11 Baugesetzbuch (contractual proceedings in urban planning and redevelopment).
[10] For more information see the relevant EU-websites, e.g.: http://europa.eu.int/comm/agriculture/rur/leaderplus/index_en.htm; http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/urban2/index_en.htm; http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/interreg3/index_en.htm

Europe (Newman, Verpraet 1999). The picture, however, is very different across Europe. In some countries such as the UK there is a very clear and long tradition of the partnership approach, whereas in other countries such as Germany, the partnership approach is quite new (Geddes 1998).

The objectives and experiences of local partnerships differ across the EU, but often partnerships target issues of regeneration. The impetus for new forms of cooperation sometimes comes from the local level, but also considerably reflects the requirements or encouragement of regional, national and European programmes and the funding they offer (Geddes 1998: 69).

Partnerships in urban regeneration can be seen as the mobilisation of "a coalition of interests drawn from more than one sector in order to prepare and oversee an agreed strategy for the regeneration of a defined area" (Bailey 1995: 1). Dabinett applies this perspective and further depicts partnership as involving "relationships between two or more different sectors within a mixed economy, including public-public, public-voluntary, public-community and public-private" (Dabinett 2005). But still it remains difficult to characterise the relations between actors which make a partnership or distinguishes partnerships from other forms of interaction. With such a broad definition, everything can be partnership. Geddes, placing particular emphasis on those partnerships aiming at social inclusion and cohesion by developing and implementing local strategies, defines partnerships along three core characteristics (Geddes 1998: 15; cf. Bailey 1995: 214):

- a formal organisational structure for policy making and implementation,
- the mobilisation of a coalition of interest and the commitment of a range of different actors and
- a common agenda and multi-dimensional action programme.

More generally, partnerships can be defined as a formally organised coalition of interests comprising actors of different sectors aiming at joint policy-making and implementation with a common agenda and action programme. Such an understanding does not depict informal relations as partnership.[11]

Partnerships then are perceived as organisations with a strategic purpose. Partnerships are given positive notions because of some key arguments supporting the partnership approach (Elander 2002: 198; cf. Bailey 1995: 32ff):

- potential creation of synergetic effects among partners,
- potential to distribute the risks of a project among partners,
- potential for some partners to influence the world view and way of action of other partners,
- potential to gain additional sources of financing,
- potential to reduce open conflict to the benefit of a consensual policy climate and the
- potential to reduce demand overload upon local governments.

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[11] But it would be still governance.

Results of a comparative in-depth study of about 30 local partnerships in ten West European countries (Geddes 1998) demonstrate that local partnerships can contribute to tackling unemployment and social exclusion.[12] Local partnerships can lead to better policy coordination and facilitate a multi-dimensional approach, using the knowledge, skills and resources of different actors. Further, they can facilitate the emergence of a stronger local policy community, help to develop a local or regional culture of collaboration and can empower key actors and mobilise policy innovations. European research indicates that where local partnerships work effectively – in terms of more effective local policy processes, better policy co-ordination, accessing new resources and stimulating innovative policy approaches – they "can have significant impacts on problems of unemployment and exclusion" (Geddes 1998: 136). Complementary to mainstream policies, partnerships can support job creation, training, local enterprises, social services and facilities as well as local communities and excluded groups in general. The question what exactly makes partnerships work effectively is left unanswered in Geddes' study.

Another result of the study is that local partnerships often do not work effectively and that there are big differences in the success of local partnerships in terms of the development of effective structures and processes. Some partnerships raise questions of accountability and transparency. Further, building and maintaining successful partnerships is said to depend on considerable investments of time and resources. This is particularly true if there is local political turbulence, absence of a strong local associative tradition or a lack of collaborative tradition in the public sector (Geddes 1998).

Partnerships bear the risk of creating less accountable policy arenas and losing local democratic legitimacy. In particular this is the case if elected councils or bodies are given only one vote among many others in new partnership arrangements (cf. Elander 2002: 199). Another point which is often neglected is that partnerships internally bear the risk of producing negative synergy, thus hindering effective governance and undermining governance capacity. Then, collaboration can be disabling and hamper the production of optimum outputs. So, if partnerships produce inertia and conflict, resources required to sustain them (transaction costs) may outweigh potential benefits (Davies 2004: 579f). This is said to be the case in many regeneration partnerships in the UK. Another empirical study of regeneration partnerships in the UK states that many partnerships are succeeding in terms of meeting their aims and objectives. Success or effectiveness of partnership work would depend on strong, competent leadership, skilled staff, clear, fair and manageable formal partnership arrangements, a shared agenda with a common long-term vision and workable medium-term objectives backed up by commitments to finance, human resources, targets and monitoring, as well as an organisationally culture supporting partnership (Carley 2000). It would seem unlikely that positive outcomes would have been achieved by single agencies working on their own. But "for every successful partnership there are others which have achieved little or nothing" (Carley 2000: 276). It is even only a minority of regeneration partnerships showing effective business involvement (Carley 2000: 283).[13] Finally, there is still little known about why some partnerships can work effectively and others can not.

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[12] The selected case-studies can be considered as being good-practice cases. It is also said that by far not all partnerships work effectively (Geddes 1998: 137).
[13] A study about coalfield regeneration supports this finding in case-studies in East Durham and Mansfield (Bennett, Beynon, Hudson 2000: 8).

Also generally the impact of urban policy and the impact of regeneration initiatives in particular is very difficult to measure when it comes to socio-economic results. Bailey concludes to his evaluation of six strategic partnerships: "How far urban policy is able to improve the economic and social wellbeing of localities and to reduce urban deprivation remains at best uncertain and at worst requires a negative conclusion" (Bailey 1995: 227).

8. A conception of urban governance?

We have learned that urban governance and partnership is not necessarily good or well-functioning (cf. 6. and 7.). But there is empirical evidence, that under certain circumstances it can add value, to manage urban development in a collaborative and multi-sector way (e.g. Healey et al 2002: 12f; Geddes 1998). For the research questions outlined in the introduction, concepts of urban governance are very helpful, as the research is asking for concrete projects and action and their relation to urban governance. Concepts of governance generally tend to emphasise outcomes and public-private interaction over formal processes and formal policy implementation (Pierre 1999: 377). The following section relates to the contemporary debate about urban governance in the context of urban development and urban management. Within this debate there is not one common definition or complete theory of urban governance.

As differentiation to the traditional model of government, Stoker identifies a baseline agreement that governance "refers to the development of governing styles in which boundaries between and within public and private sectors have become blurred" (Stoker 1998: 17). This notion relates to the discussion about a shift from government to governance. This shift is based on analytical views upon political systems recognising a transformation of traditional forms of top-down purely public sector forms of government towards what is referred to as governance in terms of new arrangements for partnership and collaboration between the public sector, the business world and the civil society (cf. 6.). Although linkages and close connections between these groups have always existed (cf. Healey et al 2002: 11) and the phrase thus rather misses the point (Lowndes 2001: 1961) the debate about urban governance has given emphasis and more interest to such arrangements. It is very unlikely that government loses its role in new forms of governance, it is just the relation between different included actors which is an object to change (cf. Pierre 2005: 453).

Urban governance can be seen as "an attempt to manage and regulate difference and to be creative in urban arenas which are themselves experiencing considerable change" (Kearns, Paddison 2000: 847) or – including also the level of participating actors – as "collective action arrangements designed to achieve some general benefit" (Healey 2004: 87). Jessop, depicting governance as a co-ordination mechanism, relates governance to the relative capacity to innovate and learn in a changing environment especially when different organisations with shared interests are involved (Jessop 1998: 32f).

The understanding of governance as it is referred to in this research excludes normative implications and builds upon the basic analytical notion of a widened field of public and private actors involved in urban development. It also denies innovation, creativity and experimentation being an integral part of governance. Governance is seen as always double-faced, authoritative and generative, constraining and enabling, disciplining and innovating (Healey 2004: 87, 92).

Urban governance is not more than a form of managing urban development including other actors besides traditional government. Government is an organisation, governance includes organisations. There is not one process called governance. But governance refers to processes of joint policy making. It provides the arena for negotiation about the future of a particular locality and the ways, measures and policies to achieve this future.

Thus, urban governance is seen as a multi-actor, multi-sector and not purely state authoritarian approach to deal with urban development and urban problems. In this broad conception, such an understanding of urban governance opens the view on organisations as much as processes, formal rules and regulation as much as informal influences and forms of governing, action as much as policies and the power of actors as much as the relevance of specific structures and local cultures. In this sense, urban governance serves as analytical model in this research embracing actors, organisations, processes and institutions.

In the extensive variety of writings and research about urban governance and connected to plenty of different understandings of the term itself there are analytical and normative notions. Analytical notions about the way how the local policy making process has changed over the last decades (cf. 6.) and normative notions about the ideal form of governance respectively about the way governance should be to be successful regarding new challenges resulting from altered general conditions for urban development (cf. 3.). In particular in the UK, urban governance has been a normative model to promote the inclusion of civic actors as resource mobilisation strategy and to de-emphasize the influence of local governments (Pierre 2005: 453).

Jessop identifies two general meanings for governance. At first, "governance can refer to any mode of co-ordination of interdependent activities." Secondly, governance is heterarchy or self-organisation and includes "negotiated inter-organisational co-ordination, and decentred, context-mediated inter-systemic steering" (Jessop 1998: 30f). Then, the character of governance would be determined by non-hierarchical elements of organisation and multi-sector cooperation including different in their general aims related organisations and actors. This, however, already states a lot about the quality of governance and thus goes far beyond the reality. Governance cannot be perceived as being a heterarchic system nor as being automatically self-reflexive. Jessop rather describes a particular form of governance in a quite narrow conception, characterised by self-organisation, reflexive rationality and as being the response to market and state failure (Jessop 2000). New forms of governance in the contrary would reflect the given structure of different national contexts and would not automatically be a response of the local level. Also Rhodes understanding of governance as self-organising, inter-organisational networks (Rhodes 1997: 53) cannot be shared. Rhodes attributes such an understanding of governance with key characteristics such as interdependence between organisations, autonomy as well as interactions between network members because of a need to exchange resources and interactions rooted in trust and all-accepted rules. Also this definition might apply to some particular forms of governance at a particular place but would not reflect the common characteristics of new forms of governance.

A policy-network based conception of urban governance as heterarchy as explained by Jessop and Rhodes appears to be too limited because it cannot account for most of the forms of governance in reality (cf. Lowndes 2001: 1962) and is not suited to define a concrete arena for this underlying research. The dominant patterns in partnership relations in

British new governance are said to be hierarchical, not coordinating and competitive (Davies 2004: 582).

Talking about quality in urban governance, it seems quite clear, that normative notions about how governance could be, are often quite far from reality. At present, there is a possibility, that governance as collective action is unachievable, in particular in large cities and urban regions (Healey et al 2002: 20). Reality than can be described as "an amalgam of collective actors working in and across cities and regions, sometimes in partnership but often in conflict with, or ignorance of, each other" (Healey et al 2002: 20). It seems that there is nowadays a general "acceptance that conflict and instability are 'normal' qualities of local governance" (Coaffee, Healey 2003: 1981). Consequently, successful forms of governance would always be exceptional and the difference between reality and optimum of cooperation in terms of relations and results would always be quite huge.

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