

URBACT CITY LAB

ON METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE

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Workshop 4: Identity and citizen participation across boundaries
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Connecting cities
Building successes





Workshop 4: Identify & citizen participation across boundaries

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Introduction to the workshop by Christian Lamour (moderator)

Regarding the core theme of the workshop, we have to deal with several fragmentations within metropolitan conurbations or city-regions. Functional fragmentation, social and spatial fragmentation and, finally cultural fragmentation due to the rise of immigration and the presence of ethnic minorities, are different fragmentations and multiplicity of identities that challenge metropolitan governance and the construction of a unique metropolitan identity.

We have to take into account that the emergent metropolitan bodies and governments are usually not as strong as municipal or regional authorities. Metropolitan governance has to deal with problems of democracy and legitimacy. There is no direct democracy in metropolitan areas

There is a key point to give sense and to reinforce metropolitan governance: to become stronger and to ensure its legitimacy, metropolitan governance has to solve the functional problems that cannot be solved at other territorial scales.

At European level during the 90 the challenge was to find the territorial cohesion. Regional polycentrism becomes one of the key paradigms of regional and urban planning in that time. Governments were faced to the problem of territorial scales for economic competitiveness but also to tackle citizenship and effective public legitimacy.

We have to activate the communities to strength the sense of living together in a fragmented area. But at the same time we have to be able to manage different scales and to adapt citizen participation to the different problems at each scale.

PRESENTATIONS & DISCUSSION

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The presentation of **Emilie Wacker** and **Emmanuel Vinchon**, from the **City of Lille (FR)** (Lille 2004 and beyond) was focused in how culture can become a strong tool to reinforce urban and metropolitan identity. They presented the experience of Lille European cultural capital in 2004, and how it impacted in a cross-border region (Lille Métropole). Culture is a tool of marketing and can create a sense of community. Local community was committed in sharing a collective project.

The strategy was to reinforce the attractiveness of the city creating a development dynamic and at the same time a sense of belonging of the citizens. With this project the bad image of the city was changed. One of the innovative components of the cultural strategy was the co production of cultural products with the inhabitants, not just to see citizens as consumers of culture.

Ensuring a high level of quality in cultural activities and political leadership are two key factors of success in Lille project.

Lille is building its future defining its vision as: European city opened to the wide world (Lille 3.000) with a strong popular participation, favouring and valuating the talent and the involvement of young people.

Sören Bollmann, Slubice (PL) and **Frankfurt Oder (DE), EGTC partner**, presented this project at the German-Polish border. The cross border region has a global population about 80.000 inhabitants. As they belong to two separate States, the two local authorities forming the cross-border conurbation do not share exactly the same competences hence the necessity to develop multi-level governance networks to address specific issues. The two local authorities have decided to deepen their relationships since 2008. They have defined a joint strategy, a cross-border political organisation including a City Council Committee, plus a series of projects facilitating greater connections between both communities and also a city marketing policy. The challenge is to achieve a common vision on the basis of a shared development strategy. It was organized a big conference where more than 200 hundred people attended to the invitation to think on

a common future for the next 10 years. Now the results of the dialogue that took place during this conference are going to be integrated in the local city councils.

Another example to increase common understanding of the cross border regions is that in all the schools of the cross border region pupils are learning languages, Polish and German.

By the moment there isn't a common legal structure. There is just a municipal assembly, a common technical staff and several thematic working groups.

Lars Victor Whitt, from **Öresund region (DK-SE)** (3,6 millions of inhabitants, and the 26% of de NGP of both countries) highlighted the relevance of communication among actors to build a common and unique cross border region. The project has two offices based in Copenhagen and in Malmö to deal with cross border issues. Speaker recognizes the lack of involvement of local people with the cross border project. Citizens are not concerned in sharing a common identity, despite that there is a common history between both countries.

The main lessons are that people participate when there are concrete issues that are clearly interesting for them, they don't participate when the issues are too abstract for them. In any case, we need time to achieve success. A dynamic and a lively discussion can happen when we invest time in the project.

Despite that he couldn't be able to attend the meeting **Councillor Derek Antrobus of Salford City Council (UK)** contribution was focused on the tension between the voluntary organisation, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and the 10 local authorities that belong to the city-region. The political leadership of the councils has accepted the identity of a "Manchester city region". Business on the whole endorses the identity of Manchester as a well-known brand which places their enterprise geographically and culturally. For ordinary citizens, however, the conurbation identity is relatively weak and contingent. This creates a tension between the strong political and economic senses of city-region identity and a citizenship which identifies primarily with its district council or local neighbourhood.

Luc Maufroy, Director of **ADT Brussels**, a **Joining Forces partner**, focused on the need of adopting a flexible mechanism to ensure cooperation within a city-region level. We are working in a region without administrative boundaries. The main challenge is to build a metropolitan governance body that involves surrounding cities.

In any case, the partners of Joining Forces show different degree of cooperation among the stakeholders of each area. But several common issues are emerging:

- A common identity is coming up within the city region
- Different identities should be arranged: national, regional, metropolitan, local...
- The tension between elected bodies and informal arrangements in metropolitan organisation.

There are also other issues that have to be highlighted. The NIMBY (Not in my back yard) phenomena is rising, linked with the tension between competing and cooperation among local authorities belonging to metropolitan areas. The fact that civil society is not organized at metropolitan level is another weakness of metropolitan governance. We need to organize citizen participation at metropolitan level.

We have to take into account that there are several social problems at metropolitan level, but normally social services are organized at local level.

We are using several tools to increase the feeling of belonging to the metropolitan level, as cultural and sport events or creating an association to joint opinion and business leaders.

The challenge of metropolitan governance is to build an internal identity (sense of belonging of the citizens living in the city region). Building an external identity can be easier: common attractiveness, city marketing...

As possible solutions and recommendations **Joining forces** propose the creation of foundations and associations at metropolitan level involving business and opinion leaders; the involvement of surrounding cities in a metropolitan governmental

body; the focus on an external identity (to create common attractiveness or territorial marketing strategies).

Hans-Günther Clev, Director of **MOT (Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière)** **Lead partner EGTC** has presented the main ideas of this network that include 6 cross border agglomerations that are exchanging and learning on their practices and experiences about governance tools. Metropolitan and cross-border governance can be faced to different contexts:

- Multilevel cooperation with different competences around a theme
- Cooperation among local authorities with similar competences on several fields of activities
- Wide governance, without transference of competence. A platform of dialogue among local authorities.

The leadership agenda of cross-border governance has to focus several issues as the financial solidarity among local councils belonging to the cross-border metropolitan region.

The institutionalisation of a collective leadership and the role of individual political leaders were mentioned as very relevant aspects to enhance cross-border governance.

Cross-border governance needs an active role of population and a participative democracy to develop a sense of a cross-border community. Just few people are interested in cross border cooperation. We have to show people which are the added value of a cross border community. For example, the city region allows the specialization of infrastructures, equipments and services that avoid the duplication of public resources. Likewise, joining areas and forces facilitates the city marketing strategy at the adequate scale.

Cross border governance has to find its legitimacy. Governance at this level has to ensure the sense of belonging beyond borders.

We have to find the ways to renovate our democracy and to ensure the involvement of citizen in the public sphere.

SOME CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS

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The key challenge is about the cohesion of a fragmented territory that has to be built to achieve economic competitiveness and social cohesion. It is about scales and governance levels, but it is as well about identity and citizenship.

Perhaps we have to distinguish between those city regions that are “national” regions from those that are “cross-border and translational” regions. Both cases were present in the workshop.

Cross border governance has to find its legitimacy. Governance at this level has to ensure the sense of belonging beyond borders and to ensure those arrangements that accommodate different local authorities in a common project.

As several speakers remarked, cross border strategies and projects have to introduce the learning of the both national languages. It is a key element to work together and to build a common identity in the long term.

The new region has to ensure social inclusion of all the local minorities and to avoid prejudices and those practices that provoke social and cultural exclusion. The new multicultural societies are very complex ones and they require new means to ensure social cohesion and cultural integration. Building city regions entails new challenges regarding social inclusion because we have to work at a more wide scale where solutions need new tools and new resources.

The challenge of metropolitan governance is to build an internal identity (sense of belonging of the citizens living in the city region). It has to be distinguished from building an external identity that can be easier: common attractiveness, city marketing....)

Cross-border governance needs an active role of population and a participative democracy to develop a sense of a cross-border community or just a city regional community. It is not evident that people is interested in cross border cooperation or in sharing membership of a city region beyond its neighbourhood or district. We have to show people which are the added value of a cross border or a city regional community.

For citizens, the city region identity is relatively weak and not visible. This creates a tension between the strong political and economic sense of city-region identity and a citizenship which identifies primarily with its district council or local neighbourhood.

The solutions deal with building virtuous relations within the city regions and the cross border regions that bring an increasing quality of social and economic conditions for people living there. When it is clear for people that this new and better quality of life is related with the growing up of the city regional, it will be the basis for a new shared identity and a real city region citizenship.

URBACT II

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It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 255 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

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