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Published in:
Bulletin of Geography. Socio-Economic Series

DOI (link to publication from Publisher):
10.12775/bgss-2022-0012

Publication date:
2022

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

NICOLAUS COPERNICUS UNIVERSITY IN TORUŃ

Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series, No. 56 (2022): 43-62
http://doi.org/10.12775/bgss-2022-0012

BULLETIN OF GEOGRAPHY. SOCIO–ECONOMIC SERIES

journal homepages:
https://apcz.umk.pl/BGSS/index
https://www.bulletinofgeography.umk.pl/

ISSN 1732–4254 quarterly

Towards political cohesion in metropolitan areas: an overview of governance models

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How to cite:
Andersen, H.T. & Damurski, Ł. (2022). Towards political cohesion in metropolitan areas: an overview of governance models. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, 56(56): 43-62. DOI: http://doi.org/10.12775/bgss-2022-0012

Abstract. As cities grew beyond their administrative borders, the demand for metropolitan governance appeared. The last 50 years have proven that there is no one, universal model of metropolitan governance, as urban regions are very different all around the world. However, it seems quite obvious that if metropolises are to be the forefront of development, they need to provide a widely defined cohesion within their subordinate territories. Metropolitan political cohesion may be defined as a collaborative public governance that offers tailored managerial solutions for enhancing development based on the subsidiarity principle and the place-based approach. Drawing on lessons from major cities in North America and Europe (Copenhagen, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Hannover, London, Wrocław and Toronto), the paper intends to dive into a few, selected cases of metropolitan government and the causes behind their failure and reappearance. How have various governments met the cardinal question of metropolises: to provide a resilient match between the functional urban region and the administrative structure? The answer to this question is not straightforward. Metropolitan authorities all over the world manage exceptionally complex systems, where the diversity of actors, complexity of relations and interdependences across an extended, fragmented and dynamic metropolitan region restrain governability. However, some general trends in metropolitan governance may be outlined, regarding recent history, main types of governance and legitimacy of metropolitan administration.

Article details:
Received: 11 September 2021
Revised: 15 January 2022
Accepted: 01 April 2022

Key words:
metropolis,
governance,
metropolitan governance,
political cohesion,
territorial cohesion

Contents:

1. Introduction

An ever-larger proportion of the global population, now over fifty percent, lives in urban areas. Urbanisation has accelerated over the last few decades, and big cities or metropolises have become more important than ever before in terms of population and economic output, as places of innovation, and as political and cultural locations. While large cities in many Western countries were in decline from the late 1960s to early 1980s, they regained momentum and now stand out as key locations for wealth and innovation. Today, new concepts like metropolisation (Ascher, 2002), *zwischenstadt* (Sieverts, 2000) or city-regions (Robson et al., 2006) are introduced as attempts to cope with the remarkable concentration of people, investments and innovation in many countries.

Across Europe, metropolises stand out as particularly successful locations in terms of employment growth, high incomes, population growth and rising foreign investments. However, the success has particular negative consequences; first, the progress of the prosperous metropolises sharply contrasts the stagnating or declining towns and rural districts. Thus, it is no wonder that most governments now consider metropolises as national assets; i.e. as key localities for the implementation of central government's efforts to secure economic growth and wealth in times of globalisation (Jouve & Lefevre, 2002). The relative weight of metropolises in terms of wealth, innovation and power has increased over the last decades. However, this new and positive interest for metropolises does also contain elements of steering and control (Andersen, 2008). Second, while metropolises as a whole seem successful, they do nevertheless often include quite a variation in terms of affluent and poor districts: a growing gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged that causes tensions and calls for political action.

Thus, the present direction of urbanisation has its pros and cons for metropolises; on the one hand, metropolises have proven to be key assets in international competition and have growing importance for national wealth. On the other hand, their success challenges the existing balances and thus cohesion at local, regional and national scale: the metropolises are simply running ahead of the other regions and thereby create new tensions (Iammarino et al., 2019).

Throughout most of the 20th century, governments in North America and Europe struggled to find a way to establish compliance between administrative and urban functional units. The overall aim was to create administrative units that could cope with providing – and financing – services as the metropolises developed. The metropolises were expected to include all parts of an area that shared a labour and housing market, to be able to plan future development and tax all citizens who benefitted from the services and opportunities provided by the metropolises. The liberalisation of international trade and the reduction of customs and other obstacles to investments and trade formed new realities; the competitiveness of localities appeared as a key aim for most cities and regions. Metropolises in particular became cornerstones in national strategies for industrial and economic development. Globalisation, especially the Single Market in Europe have had major influences on newer urban policies: national states consider metropolises to be decisive factors for success under conditions of globalisation and intensified competition. Thus, the big cities are expected to deliver innovation, employment, wealth and growth. However, to do so, the metropolises also need a coordination of their efforts.

The paper draws on the construction and later abolishment of metropolitan governments in many Western countries and their reappearance at the turn of the 21st century. Diving into a few, selected cases of metropolitan government in Europe and North America, the paper seeks to answer the cardinal question: how can a resilient match between the functional urban region and the administrative structure be provided? In particular, the paper aims at understanding the consequences of having one metropolitan body to coordinate and solve recent challenges in the wider urbanised area, and as a result to contribute to the overall cohesion in the region. Lessons from the cities of Copenhagen, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Hannover, London, Wrocław and Toronto lead to conclusions on the relationship between governance structures and metropolitan cohesion. The general hypothesis of the paper is that the need for political cohesion

in metropolises can be achieved by a deliberate mix of the tools used so far in urban policy.

2. Methodological approach

This paper is a selective review of literature related to metropolises and municipal governance. It involves a critical content analysis as thea main research tool, which enables relevant texts to be found and juxtaposed against one another, and reliable conclusions to be drawn regarding the research objective.

The selection of scientific works, press publications and policy documents was made using the following criteria:

1. relation to the current discourse on metropolitan governance;
2. descriptive values related to selected metropolises;
3. practical effectiveness of governance solutions on various levels of administration (national, regional, metropolitan and municipal).

Each of the documents was examined using content analysis tools, such as keyword search and annotation.

The logical structure of the paper may be depicted as follows: from a general overview of the metropolitan development in the last decades, through the description of the to-date discourse on metropolitan governance, raising the question of cohesion and analysis of seven examples the argumentation leads to discussion and conclusions (Fig. 1). This arrangement of contents ensures the clarity of presentation and enables the paper's objective to be achieved by deriving the concept of political cohesion in metropolitan areas from the to-date experiences of particular cities.

3. The role of metropolises in addressing developmental challenges

Globalisation is forcing cities and regions to develop new strategies capable of dealing with uncertain economic and social conditions. Globalisation has also forced the national state to retreat from the position as a guarantor of social and economic cohesion; this pushes sub-national units further in this direction (Hambleton et al., 2002). However, the pressure to cope with the tension between the economic need to develop and the political demand to redistribute income remains for cities: they should be able to attract external investors while, on the other hand, also providing a decent living standard, including for unskilled workers.

Local governments, and metropolitan governments in particular, play a crucial role as leaders, regulators and conduits for conversion of ideas into policy (Hambleton & Gross, 2007a). While globalisation intensifies competition both between social groups within individual cities and between cities across the world, the efforts to cope with it lie increasingly with local governments. Thus, at all scales, governments must focus upon the urban development and its potentials, and pay particular attention to possible ways of promoting economic development by attracting investments (Hambleton & Gross, 2007b). This they usually do via projects and infrastructure, which are considered the most direct, fastest way, but also by developing new education and research centres. Other means

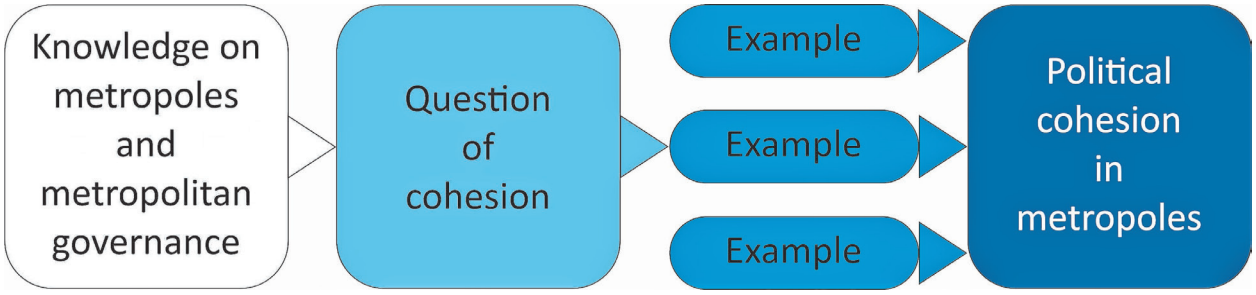

Fig. 1. Logical scheme of the approach followed in the paper
Source: author's own study

to promote localities for international competition are cultural institutions, inclusive sport arenas and various events (see Harvey, 1989).

One effect of intensified attempts to raise global competitiveness is accelerated deterritorialisation, a national state change strategy from spatial Keynesianism (see Brenner, 2004) towards a location policy aiming at promoting the competitive successes of strategic cities and regions through large-scale investments and re-concentration of socio-economic assets. This implies the development of customised, place-specific capacities in regions and major cities. The consequence of this shift in the aims of spatial policy is the abandonment of activities addressing uneven geographical distribution of development, but actively intensifying policies aiming at enhancing economic growth at particular local level I locations.

The competitive state (Pedersen, 2011) has dropped the primitive claim of "rolling back" the state in favour of a state-led transformation of society. Several Asian countries (e.g. Japan, Singapore, Korea, Malaysia and others) have long based their economic strategy on this model, with major success. In the national machinery, cities and regions are simply conceived as components, as a means to achieve specified objectives.

A stronger focus is on flows, mobility, variability, flexibility and nomadism rather than stocks, fixity, stability and permanence. The result is "Archipelago Europe" – a Europe marked by "strong concentration of techno-scientific, financial, economic and, above all, cultural-political decision power into a restricted number of 'islands' of wealth and innovation, surrounded by a sea of 'peripheries'" (Petrella, 2000: 70). Places such as London, Paris, Milan, Amsterdam and Brussels will contain the best universities, the biggest and most aggressive financial institutions, the most brilliant cultural institutions, multinational organisations and political power centres (see Veltz, 2000). Such islands will integrate themselves faster than they will integrate their peripheral surroundings. As such, this trend will threaten social, economic and political cohesion at the national level.

Since Petrella presented his view on the future of Europe in 2000, the regional changes since then have partly confirmed his pessimism (Iammarino et al., 2019). Based on regional GDP per head, the authors find a clear relationship between economic and population growth, low unemployment and employment change during the period 2000–2014 in the EU.

Processes of globalisation and associated changes such as liberalisation via the WTO, the EU single market and similar arrangements are all examples of changing conditions. This implies that the growth or decline of cities and other locations is no longer merely a national affair depending on national (regional) economy or policies. Instead of protection through national regulation or customs, international competition exposes metropolises to open competition. Finally, metropolitan areas are not by definition guaranteed success, or at least size alone is not enough. Metropolises need to have strengths in key economic areas, but also to maintain legitimacy in relation to local stakeholders, politicians and communities. Otherwise, internal tensions can reduce or even hinder metropolitan development.

Organising metropolitan government to match both external and internal challenges is often difficult and complicated due to the many conflicting interests. It may be relevant to consider some basic features with metropolitan government. The overall argument for metropolitan governments has long been the need to make the administrative system correspond to social and economic realities. While this is simple in theory, it is quite difficult to draw a line that delimits an urban space. However, a first issue is power, which depends on responsibility – is it a single-purpose or a multi-purpose government? Single obligations such as garbage collection, school management, water delivery or street cleaning do not demand a government; they represent obligations a company or a public organisation can handle. However, when a trade-off between various obligations such as health services, investments and planning exists, the only way to handle these is through political decisions (Lefevre, 2002). Political decisions in turn require legitimacy, which demands elections of politicians representing the metropolitan population.

Yet, few metropolitan governments are constant in their processes or obligations; while metropolitan governance had a strong technocratic mark in the first decades after World War Two, globalisation changed circumstances, duties and policymaking (Antalovsky et al., 2005): First, new patterns of

horizontal governance emerged. This involved a shift from the traditional and formal top-down approach centred on public administration towards comprehensive but complex and informal partnerships of public and non-public actors. One consequence hereof is that local governments at least partly did shift their main role from decision-maker to become a facilitator and mediator of policy processes. Second, new patterns of vertical governance have evolved. This includes a movement towards a pattern of multi-scalar governance via partnerships or covenants between national and subnational level in order to coordinate and co-finance specific targets and policies. Third, there has been a further involvement of citizens and communities in local efforts. In order to increase local commitment, various stakeholders – citizens, NGOs, private businesses, etc. – are involved in both development of policies and final decisions. Community engagement has proven to be a better way to raise legitimacy and commitment than simple consultations. Fourth, stronger involvement of a broader part of society encompasses processes of policy learning. Governance, understood as the broadening of political decision-making by involving stakeholders from outside governments, networks, and coordination between various levels of government all promote policy learning. Such lessons raise the local capacity to cope with new social challenges.

An OECD paper (Arend, 2014) researched governance of 263 metropolitan areas (functional urban area with 500,000 inhabitants or more); while a few countries did not have governing bodies in metropolitan areas at all, the vast majority had them to varying degrees (Fig. 2). In countries like France, Netherlands and Sweden, all metropolises did have a governing body, and, in the US, four out of five metropolises had one, while in the UK around a third had a metropolitan body of some kind. However, 48 or 27% of the metropolitan bodies had legal powers, i.e. could impose binding laws or regulations. The rest of the metropolitan governance organisations (178) did not have any legal powers. The competences of the governance bodies are mostly regional development (81%) and transport (78%), but also spatial planning is common – 67% of the metropolitan bodies have competences here. The other areas of duties such as waste disposal (35%), water provision (35%), culture and leisure (29%) and tourism (26%) are less frequent.

Municipal representatives constitute the dominating form of governance of the metropolitan bodies; they account for every second organisation. Furthermore, mixed leadership (municipal representatives + business leaders and/or other organisations, including other levels of government) have quite an impact, as 20% have this type of leadership. Public and directly elected representatives are found in only 11% of the metropolitan bodies.

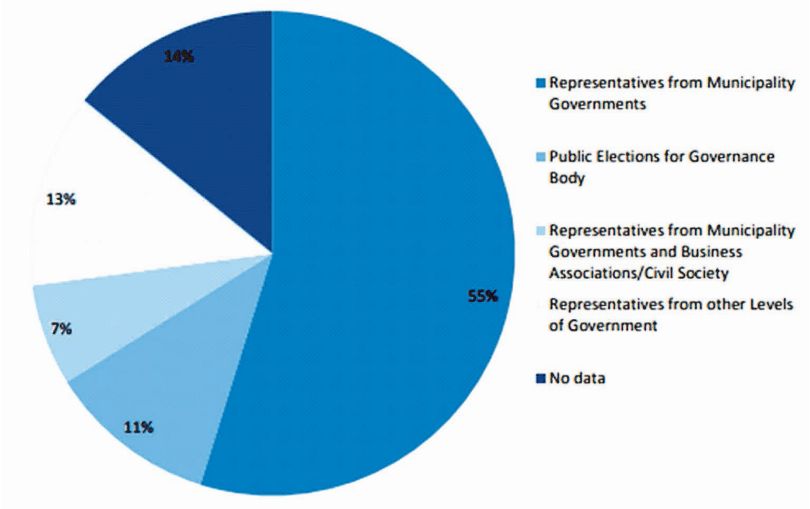

Fig. 2. Leadership of metropolitan bodies. Source: (Arend et al., 2014)
Source: own elaboration

Another report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2015) outlined different metropolitan governance structures, including informal/soft coordination; inter-municipal authorities; supramunicipal authorities; special status "Metropolitan Cities". The first type gives informal support across an area and all the municipalities involved have the same importance, sharing expertises and problems. This solution is adopted by different metropolitan areas such as Athens-Attica in Greece and "Delta Metropool" in the Netherlands. The second type is an official authority with members from all the municipalities inside a geographical area. There is some kind of hierarchy between the members inscribed. In Europe, the Metropolitan area of Frankfurt is considered an inter-municipal authority. The third type foresees an upper level of government exercised by the biggest municipality inside the group. It is a vertical structure such as Greater Paris, The Metropolitan city of Milan or the London Authority. The fourth type relates to the international megalopolis. These metropolises, because of their incredible dimension, have a special status. In Europe, there are no examples of a metropolis with this last type of governance, though famous international cases are Hong Kong in China or Daejon in Korea (Pirlone et al., 2017).

4. Governing metropolises

The demand for metropolitan governance arrived in Europe and North America when the cities grew beyond their old borders; the rapid urbanisation in the 19th and early 20th century left the existing administrative arrangements hopelessly outdated (Matthiessen, 1985). While large cities, most of them capitals, swallowed villages and smaller towns in their vicinity during their fast growth, still bigger spaces integrated in practice. In relation to housing and labour markets, this change was soon felt as a problem: disorganised public transport, an obvious lack of fairness between users of and payers for urban services, and an absence of planning in the interests of the public for the whole built up area. The simple and easy solution was amalgamations; once the built environment moved beyond existing administrative borders; existing cities annexed the newly urbanised areas (see Harding et al., 2006). The advantage of this procedure is that it is a logical and simple process; new districts presented an opportunity to expand public administration and services and increased demand for employees. Moreover, the shift from rural to urban status did often involve a marked improvement in public service.

However, this approach ran into still stronger resistance as suburban municipalities developed and gained political strength and self-confidence: suburban governments denied simple amalgamations and suggested inter-municipal cooperation as an alternative (see Sharpe, 1995). Suburbia did not play a major role in the beginning of the last century, but a few decades later the proportions had changed: suburban districts soon made up much – sometimes even most – of the metropolitan population. This itself was a gamechanger; moreover, suburbia was a new part of the metropolitan space, young, middle-class families with good, stable incomes contrasted with the "leftovers" in the old city (the elderly, the working class, low-income households, and so on). Segregation further enlarged the inequalities in many metropolises; affluent districts separated from poor areas benefitted from lower taxation and fewer social problems.

It was one thing to identify a need for overall metropolitan coordination, but quite another to find a model that will work in practice and be acceptable to the involved local governments (see Toonen, 1998; Sancton, 2005; Arend et al., 2014). The rationale for inclusion of the whole metropolitan area into one organisation or body is twofold. On the one hand, there is the principle of externality or fiscal equivalence, i.e. those who benefit from various forms of services should also co-finance it. While user charges will cover parts of the costs, the usual picture involves support that is public, i.e. paid for by local taxpayers. Without some coordination and cooperation across existing administrative borders, services like public transport, hospitals and culture are unable to achieve expected economies of scale. On the other hand, the scale of modern metropolises leads to separation of functions and social groups. This can further produce social tensions and suboptimal uses of public resources.

Transparency seems to be another important feature in metropolitan governance. An approach

called "messy social choice" proposed by Storper (2014) accepts the limitations of existing decision-making systems and promotes a dialogic interchange of information, participation and clarification of what the principals want to achieve and who should be involved. It assumes a regular review of the configuration of agencies and interests that compensates the imbalances in power, with better formal support for participation and monitoring of who is at the table and whether they are being heard (Storper, 2014).

The simplest way to organise a municipal government for a large city is to establish one municipality for the contiguous built-up area. While simple, this model also meets strong resistance. When Oslo and Copenhagen expanded more than a hundred years ago, both cities followed this model – the unitary model. However, it worked fine when Copenhagen had around half a million inhabitants in a city of 25 km^2; today, Metropolitan Copenhagen covers about 2,700 km^2, has two million inhabitants and stretches around 100 km from north to south. At this scale, local commitment becomes difficult; megacities like New York, Tokyo or Mumbai cannot be local or manageable if a city should involve some sense of being one community.

An alternative to changing the borders of existing municipalities is to establish an inter-municipal, special-purpose or single-purpose body, dedicated to, say, public transport or higher education. Representatives from affected municipalities often control such single-purpose bodies; this model is popular and widely used in the USA. The main argument is that the model is more flexible and relates to local needs. The weakness is that decisions made by the single-purpose body need acceptance by all involved municipalities, i.e., all partners have a de facto veto on decisions. In metropolitan areas that contain many combinations of land-use, social and income differences, individual municipalities seldom have identical interests and priorities. This may easily produce "free riders" that benefit from common efforts but minimise their own contributions, which is in sharp contrast to those who advocate for planning, coordination and fairness.

A different approach, known as the "pure metro model" (Sharpe, 1995), attempts to bridge the need for cross-municipal coordination, to achieve economy of scale while at the same time preserving local municipalities. Although this model removes some functions from local municipalities, it is easier to operate than the unitary model; it also meets less resistance as it leaves existing municipal structures intact. The pure metro model appeared in the 1960s in the UK; GLC (Greater London Council), established in 1965 and abolished in 1986, stands out as the key example of this two-tier governance model. However, other cities in the UK as well as in other European countries also introduced the model; the main tasks have been either monopolistic or metro-wide functions such as traffic, sewers, water, planning, education and culture.

5. The need for cohesion

As shown, there is no single, universal model of metropolitan governance, as metropolitan regions are very different all around the world (Pirlone et al., 2017). However, it seems quite obvious that if metropolises are to be at the forefront of development, they need to provide a widely defined cohesion within their subordinate territories. Such cohesion should be considered in various spatial scales (from local up to regional) and in various aspects (territorial, social, economic, etc.). Metropolises present particular potential to address contemporary developmental challenges in a more effective way compared to the municipal level (which has limited capacity to manage wider areas) and a more direct and practical way compared to the regional level (which deals with general orientations) (Pirlone et al., 2017).

In the search for cohesion, the question of power distribution must be raised: who really governs has never been equal to the formal organisational landscape of governance agencies. Certain underprivileged groups in society sometimes manage to organise at a very local scale to influence decision-making, but they rarely have the resources to influence large-scale public policy, which is the favourite target of well-moneyed and well-organised interests (Storper, 2014). The experience gained by various functional areas in their development processes shows that building internal cohesion requires the creation of new collaborative arrangements and bodies to support

urban authorities' decision making (see Dijkstra, 2017). Delegation of power results in capacity-building and institutional knowledge enhancement, which, in consequence, leads to widened citizen participation. In the recently updated cohesion policy objectives for the EU, this direction is quite clearly outlined: one of the aims is to bring "Europe closer to citizens" by involving more local initiatives and strategies, more inclusive partnership agreements with local and regional authorities and greater citizen engagement and empowerment (Margaras, 2019).

The political literature suggests that any kind of cohesion policy should promote integrated and place-based approaches to foster economic, social and territorial issues, while at the same time recognising the role of sustainable urban development (see Dijkstra, 2017). As Barca (2009) pointed out, only clear territorial reference in public policy may tackle persistent inefficiency (under-utilisation of resources resulting in income below potential in both the short and long run) and social exclusion (primarily, an excessive number of people below a given standard in terms of income and other metrics of well-being). Therefore, one of the criteria of metropolitan cohesiveness of metropolises should be a territorial approach to development.

To conclude: more political cohesion is required in metropolitan areas in order to exploit their true potential. Metropolitan political cohesion means a collaborative public governance that offers tailored managerial solutions for enhancing development based on the subsidiarity principle and the place-based approach (see *Territorial Agenda*, 2011). In the subsequent sections of the paper, various governing patterns are outlined with reference to political practice in selected metropolitan areas.

6. Examples

Only a few metropolitan districts in the world have already defined their definitive governance tools. The shift from theoretical rhetoric to practical decision-making functions is underway (see Pirlone et al., 2017). In this section, selected examples of contemporary metropolitan governments will be reviewed in order to outline their contribution to the concept of political cohesion. The sample of seven large urban areas is not representative of all metropolises in statistical terms but is selected taking into account the unique, tailored administrative solutions in each location. Moreover, it is expected to provide a wide, international picture of possible metropolitan settings, including Eastern and Western Europe as well as North America. Content analysis of scientific literature and policy documents enables conclusions to be drawn on the role of administrative structures in shaping widely defined cohesion in metropolitan areas.

6.1. London

London is one of the most complete experiments of the "metropolitan model". The history of London's governance since the middle of the 19th century tried to follow the continuing spatial expansion of the city-region and resulted in a series of major governmental reorganisations (in 1888, 1965 and 2000). The first city-wide government was established as London County Council (LCC) in 1888 to deal particularly with the various challenges of a rapidly expanding but socially polarised metropolis. With numerical and spatial changes, this local tier of government has continued to play a very important role ever since. The 1960s brought a very considerable spatial extension of this tier, to cover the whole of the continuously urbanised area, up to the point where its further development was halted by a Green Belt drawn up at the end of the 1930s (Gordon & Travers, 2010). In 1965, an area-wide political structure named the Greater London Council was erected, with metropolitan authorities comprising of directly elected representatives, having many "environmental" powers and its own tax system. Nonetheless, the territory administered by GLC seemed singularly narrow, and the powers granted them clashed with those of the basic authorities. In many cases, conflicts between the two levels arose (over planning, highway management and public transport). The history of English metropolitan counties ended in 1986, when the Conservative Government abolished them and replaced them with ad hoc structures for a small number of services (Lefevre, 1998).

London entered the 21st century with a brand-new government structure, vesting most city-wide

"authority" in London's first democratically elected mayor. The Greater London Authority (GLA), known colloquially as City Hall, is the devolved regional governance body of London, with jurisdiction over both the City of London and the ceremonial county of Greater London. The authority was established in 2000, following a local referendum, and derives most of its powers from the *Greater London Authority Act* 1999 and the *Greater London Authority Act* 2007.

The GLA is a regional authority, with powers over transport, policing, economic development, and fire and emergency planning. Strategic planning in London is the shared responsibility of the Mayor of London, 32 London boroughs and the Corporation of the City of London (Mayor of London, 2016). The mayor is obliged to create and implement a legally binding strategic plan – the *London Plan*. The individual London Borough councils have to comply with the plan, and the mayor has the power to override planning decisions made by the London Boroughs if they are against the interests of London as a whole. The *London Plan*, because of its statutory power, can thus impose "metropolitan" policy on the boroughs on issues such as residential densities, housing allocations, waste regulation or tall buildings (Gordon & Travers, 2010).

The London metropolitan area includes a population of 8.9 million people from many different national and ethnic backgrounds, an extremely broadly-based service economy, and a functional urban region that stretches some 150 miles across. Its complexity and fragmentation is a significant barrier to effective organisation and goes well beyond conventional spatial planning. Therefore, a multi-faceted approach involving a set of complementary actions – such as reshaping of incentives, encouragement of sectoral and sub-regional collaborations, restoration of a shared technical and analytic infrastructure, routine activities to promote understanding of regional interdependences, and national government leadership – needs to be pursued over an extended period to build an effective capacity for governance (Gordon & Travers, 2010).

The *London Plan* of 2016, in its section "Implementation and monitoring review", states that the mayor will work collaboratively to deliver a positive approach to optimising land use. He is committed to engagement with all groups and individuals concerned with planning for London, including: government from national to local level; other public bodies/agencies; private businesses and trade/representative bodies; and voluntary and community-sector groups. According to the document, the planning system can play a major role in decentralizing power, strengthening communities and neighbourhoods, and promoting London's sustainable development (Mayor of London, 2016).

Those postulates show the potential to build the cohesion in the whole metropolitan region of London and the readiness of its authorities to coordinate various policies throughout this complex area. However, the strict administrative structure constitutes a rather top-down distribution of power, which will not necessarily contribute to empowerment and equity of all stakeholders.

6.2. Rotterdam

The metropolitan area of Rotterdam has been a subject of public debate since the 1960s. In 1964, the Rijnmond or Greater Rotterdam (Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond) authority was constituted. It had directly elected representatives and possessed particular powers within strategic planning, policies concerning port and related business-parks development, housing, transport and infrastructure, open-air recreation, and the environment (Lefevre, 1998; Raadschelders & Toonen, 1999). Yet, soon after its establishment, conflicts started to arise between the municipality of Rotterdam and the Rijnmond about the interests of the seaport, which paralysed the governance and integration process. So, in 1985, the Rijnmond was converted from a public authority into a voluntary collaborative organisation OOR (Overlegorgaan Rijnmondgemeenten). Governed by a regional council chaired by the mayor of Rotterdam, OOR was composed of delegate council members from its constituent municipalities (Buitelaar et al., 2007).

In the 1990s, Rotterdam faced a monumental challenge: the political-administrative elites of the city and of Parliament introduced a consolidated city-region concept, i.e., the creation of a city-province (Raadschelders & Toonen, 1999). The proposal made by OOR representatives was to instal a metropolitan government as a complete new (and

fourth) administrative tier, but this was considered to be constitutionally too complex and was blocked by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Therefore, the proposed urban regional body was given the status of province. The design also included a revolutionary idea to abolish the municipality of Rotterdam by splitting it into several new municipalities. However, after the national and local elections of 1994, the new coalition was less keen on large consolidated metropolitan governments. Simultaneously, all the municipalities within the urban regions continued their cooperation by extending the *Framework Law* through the 2000s (Buitelaar et al., 2007).

In 2015, the Dutch government undertook the development of a National Urban Agenda (Agenda Stad), in parallel to a series of broad institutional reforms. This included abolishing the country's traditional eight city-regions (associations of municipalities) and the emergence of the Metropolitan Region of Rotterdam-The Hague (Metropoolregio Rotterdam Den Haag). MRDH is a geographical area that spans 23 municipalities in the southern Randstad region, covers about 36% of the area of the Province of Zuid-Holland and is home to a population of 2.7 million people (OECD, 2016).

One of the central objectives of this new metropolitan authority is to bring the economies of Rotterdam, The Hague and their surrounding municipalities closer together while generating growth and well-being. There is no contiguous built-up urbanisation between the two cities, although the distance is roughly 30 km. Even if commuter flows and economic interactions within the MRDH area have increased over the past years, it is not yet a single, integrated functional area (OECD, 2016).

The initiative for metropolitan co-ordination came from municipal leaders, concretised by the central government's decision, reflected in the carefully designed balance of powers between the two largest cities, as well as between them and their smaller neighbours. The work of the MRDH body is organised into two pillars: transport and economic development. The co-operation is formed by two governing committees, one directing the formal top-down responsibility transferred from central government for public transport and one bottom-up, directing the voluntary inter-municipal cooperation for economic development (OECD, 2016).

Bearing in mind the turbulent history of Rotterdam metropolitan governance, the MRDH is facing a big challenge: it needs to demonstrate that it can be more than another platform for dialogue and that it can achieve real change over both the short and long term. The presence of metropolitan authority does not, in itself, guarantee better policy co-ordination (OECD, 2016).

6.3. Copenhagen

Copenhagen had nearly half a million inhabitants in 1900; the city was densely packed and, after a rapid growth period in the 1870s, urban growth had migrated into neighbouring municipalities. However, as these were rural and without the preconditions for the demands of a steep population growth (i.e. water supply, sewers, schools, streets, public transport, and so on), the result was chaotic and strongly criticised at local and national levels. The solution was an amalgamation of the nearest located rural districts in 1901/02. It tripled the space of City of Copenhagen and offered necessary room for urban expansion on into the 1930s.

As the urbanisation proceeded, communities at still further distance felt the influence of the city. Without planning legislation, only sectorial plans existed; these were plans made by national railways, the counties' planning of road networks, and plans for public utility services (gas, water and electricity). They were of course uncoordinated, and services seldom crossed municipal borders. To compensate for this, private organisations began to formulate a plan for a regional road system (1926) and an actual regional plan for 1948 – the well-known *Fingerplan.*

Copenhagen's growth had stagnated during the war, but, soon after, the urbanisation accelerated in the form of suburbanisation. It stretched the urbanised space considerably. People moving out from the central city suddenly inhabited many smaller municipalities. This produced a huge pressure on public services, and public transport was unable to deliver a satisfactory service. Consequently, the municipalities established a volunteer cooperation in 1956–1974; however, the volunteer organisation could not prevent some municipalities from attempting to accomplish their growth visions.

Despite some regulation by national government (an act on planning had been in operation since 1938), the regulation did not prevent "wild" and unplanned growth.

A major administrative reform of local governments in the 1970s reduced the number of municipalities and gave them more competences. However, the reform did not involve Greater Copenhagen; with few exceptions, both counties and municipalities remained the same. Thus, the City of Copenhagen contained only around a third of the metropolitan population. To compensate for this, a new body – Greater Copenhagen Council – appeared; it obtained wide competences for planning and provision of services: public transport, hospital services, major roads, urban development, planning and administration of rural landscape, environmental issues, some cultural activities, and more. Moreover, it had right of taxation. However, the council was weak, as individual municipalities appointed its members; this gave the council low political legitimacy.

The end of the post-war boom, and hence urban stagnation, made the planning competences redundant; the municipalities considered many restrictions and guidelines made by the council to be unacceptable, unnecessary constraints. Consequently, central government strongly supported by local governments stepwise hollowed out the competences of the council in the 1980s. A right-wing government simply stripped the council of its coordinating functions and planning competences as well as direct responsibility for public transport and hospitals. Finally, the council – inspired by the policy of the UK – was abolished in 1989.

During the 1990s, national government tried several times to set up a smaller and more investment-oriented unit to promote the growth of metropolitan Copenhagen. First, in 2000, a new body, Greater Copenhagen Development Council, came into being. It had limited competences and indirectly elected members. The administrative reform of 2007 abolished the council and the 14 counties in the country; the reform divided metropolitan Copenhagen into two: the capital region, which covered two thirds of the population, and Region Zealand (including the rest of the Island), which contained about a third of the metropolitan population. The new regions have directly elected councillors, but the competences are limited (mainly hospital operations) and they do not have the right of taxation.

6.4. Toronto

Toronto is Canada's largest city and is located in Ontario province. Its metropolitan area, named the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) is one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing regions in North America. While Toronto's competitive advantage has historically been its location in the heart of the Great Lakes region with close proximity to major United States markets, today the city is widely recognised for its highly-educated workforce and uniquely multicultural population of 7.8 million people. The GGH also contains many of Ontario's most significant ecological and hydrologic natural environments and scenic landscapes, including the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Niagara Escarpment and other natural areas.

A recently introduced *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (Ministry… 2019) is the Ontario government's initiative to plan development in a way that supports economic prosperity, protects the environment and helps communities achieve a high quality of life. It continues an over-15-year history of metropolitan planning in Toronto (which started after establishing the *Places to Grow Act* in 2005 – see Ministry, 2006) and replaced the previous document of the same title of 2017. According to the 2019 *Plan*, a co-ordinated approach will be taken to deal with issues that cross municipal boundaries, both between provincial ministries and agencies, and by the province in its dealings with municipalities, local boards and other related planning agencies.

In particular, a dedicated policy document called a *Municipal Comprehensive Review* was introduced in order to implement the goals and directions of the Plan. The review requires cooperation between various levels of public administration, including upper-tier and lower-tier municipalities, as Ontario municipalities are divided into single-tier (e.g., Toronto, Hamilton, Barrie) or two-tier entities. In the latter category, the upper tier municipality is one formed by two or more lower-tier municipalities.

A single-tier municipality is one that does not form part of an upper-tier municipality for municipal purposes and assumes all municipal responsibilities set out under the *Municipal Act* and other provincial legislation.

Thus, through a municipal comprehensive review, single-tier municipalities or upper-tier municipalities, in consultation with their subordinate lower-tier municipalities, are expected to identify development targets (including establishing appropriate intensification indicators aiming at higher density of built-up areas) and address matters that cross municipal boundaries. They are also obliged to apply the forecasts outlined in the *GGH Growth Plan* by undertaking integrated planning actions, including: establishing a hierarchy of settlement areas; supporting infrastructure and public service facilities in a long-term perspective; achieving complete communities through a more compact built form; and protecting the environmental and agricultural areas. These actions should be implemented through a *municipal comprehensive review* and, where applicable, include direction to lower-tier municipalities. Municipal planning authorities are also encouraged to co-ordinate planning matters and to facilitate knowledge sharing in land-use planning processes.

The term "complete communities" mentioned in the *GGH Growth Plan* means mixed-use neighbourhoods or other areas within cities, towns and settlement areas. Such a locality should offer and support opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to conveniently access most of the necessities for daily living, including an appropriate mix of jobs, local stores and services, and a full range of housing options, transportation options and public service facilities. Complete communities are age-friendly and may take different shapes and forms appropriate to their contexts.

The *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* is a relatively restrictive document, as all decisions made after its introduction in May 2019 in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter have to conform to this *Plan*. Moreover, the Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, which develops a set of performance indicators to measure the effectiveness of this policy, monitors the implementation of the *Plan*. Such strong administrative commitment to metropolitan planning, consistently implemented for more than a decade, results in high political cohesion in defining the common goals for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and implementing them in territorial policy. However, it may lack the flexibility necessary for managing complex and dynamic development processes.

6.5. Hannover

The capital of the German state of Niedersachsen is Hannover; the city has about half a million inhabitants and Greater Hannover (Region Hannover) nearly 1.2 million. The region was established on the basis of legislation by uniting the City of Hannover with the Landkreis (suburban and rural surroundings). Eighty-four councillors govern Greater Hannover; whereof 53 are elected in suburban districts and only 31 in the city. The regional president heads the administration; he is directly elected.

Hannover forms the core area of the wider The Hannover–Braunschweig–Göttingen–Wolfsburg Metropolitan Region that includes nearly four million inhabitants. This organisation aims at promoting mobility, health sciences, culture, marketing and businesses, innovation, and science in the region. The region contains 19 universities, 30 scientific institutions and several world-leading industries such as VW, Continental AG and Sennheiser.

The location of Hannover provides an attractive position for communication and transport in Germany; major highways cross around the city just as the Landwehr canal passes through the city. Moreover, easy access by high-speed train has made the city an attractive meeting place, and the Hannover Messe is one of the most important fairs in Germany. In particular, EXPO 2000, under the motto "Man - Nature - Technology" left lasting impressions on the region. In addition to the presentation of promising solutions to the conflict between technology development and social and ecological responsibility, the exhibition's conceptual approaches included the regional aspect of recycling all EXPO-related facilities. These included a new station at the Messe-area and construction of a light rail line to Hannover Fairs.

Manufacturing industry was a leading sector in the urban economy to the early 1970s. However, then began the process of deindustrialisation in parallel with a sharp expansion of service businesses. One effect of this structural shift was a population decline during the 1980s, but since 1990 the population has increased and reached 536,000 in 2019.

Greater Hannover Transport, established in 1970, coordinates public transport in the region. The Region Hannover controls the company and hence is able to produce cohesion between regional planning policy and the available transport services.

The public transport company has proven to be a success, and similar functions have stepwise been "regionalised", i.e. taken over or coordinated by the region Greater Hannover. This includes garbage, hospital services and fire brigades. Cultural institutions are co-financed by the region as well (Priebs, 2006). It seems that the power balance between participating municipalities, in combination with a sustainable model for cost sharing between central and peripheral parts of the region, has produced a solid ground for the success of the regional cooperation.

The strong competences of the Greater Hannover region prevent single municipalities from expanding in an uncoordinated manner or against joint decided strategies. This is a key element in the success of the Greater Hannover region. Nevertheless, there is a longer experience with different forms of regional cooperation, which most likely has prepared the regional cooperation: Grossraum Hannover (1974–80) replaced Verband Grossraum Hannover (1962–74); Zweckverband Grossraum took over 1980 and lasted twelve years before replacement by Hannover Kommunalverband Grossraum Hannover (1992–2001). The present organisation, Region Hannover, appeared in 2001 (Wassermann, 2005).

The regional governance structure of Hannover shows a well-developed example of the "metropolitan model". It is stepwise corrected in order to match new claims and conditions, but demonstrates an interesting case for combining traditional technocratic coordination with more narrow, growth-oriented policies. The governance arrangement of Greater Hannover demonstrates an unusual ability to combine legitimacy and coordination across a diverse metropolitan region.

6.6. Wrocław

The "metropolitan issue" entered the Polish public debate with the book by 1999 Bohdan Jałowiecki titled *Metropolie* (Metropolises), although it obviously existed in academic discourse before (see Frysztacki, 1997). The author listed several criteria that a metropolis should meet, such as investments, services, institutions, infrastructure, etc. and outlined the main determiners of metropolisation: internationalisation and globalisation. Both significantly influenced the Polish transformation from socialist political system to democracy in the 1990s and resulted in the growing role of metropolisation.

Since then, metropolises have become an indispensable element of policy-making on various levels of public administration, starting from the national spatial planning concepts down to the regional and municipal strategies. For example, the spatial development plan for Lower Silesia region of 2002 presented Wroclaw as a leader of progress – a multi-functional pole within its metropolitan area, having European potential and range (*Uchwała* …, 2002). This somewhat exaggerated vision regarding the real capacity of the city (see Damurski, 2006) was criticised in the following years, when it became clear that Polish cities have only a limited range of metropolitan functions (Markowski & Marszał, 2006; Mironowicz, 2006). Nevertheless, the core national document of spatial development (*Koncepcja* …, 2012, still in force) defined three levels of hierarchy of metropolises in Poland: European, national, regional. It also described the necessary functional links between them and stated that future spatial development of the country will be based on the polycentric "network metropolis" (Pol. *metropolia sieciowa*).

Following those deliberations, further policy solutions focused on so-called Functional Urban Areas (FUAs), defined as a core city and the surrounding labour pool. In particular, functional urban areas of regional capital cities became a compulsory element of regional planning documents (see *Ustawa I planowaniu* …, 2003 amended in 2015). Within this approach, delimitation issues were raised and particular cohesion policies were implemented, including the

Integrated Territorial Investments stimulating cross-border cooperation and coordination within FUAs. Metropolises remained a concept used to describe specific central urban functions, but mainly in reference to metropolitan unions (such as Upper Silesian Metropolitan Union).

In Wrocław, the process of introducing metropolitan governance is under way. A project called "Study of Functional Cohesion in Wroclaw Functional Area" conducted in 2014–2015 as a multi-level governance exercise enabled necessary capacity-building and started a real cooperation between representatives of three core levels of public administration: the regional Institute of Territorial Development (part of the Lower Silesia voivodship marshal's office), the Wrocław Province office (Pol. *poviat starosty*) and several municipalities (including Wrocław Municipality Office). According to the innovative partnership formula adopted in the project, the role of the leader was granted to the Wrocław Province office, which is neutral in terms of its policy-making responsibilities and provides a fair representativeness of interests of all involved parties (Belof, 2016). The results of the Study were mainly connected with the delimitation of the Wrocław Functional Area and with opening new cooperation channels, but they did not introduce any particular metropolitan governing bodies or common policies.

There are two "metropolitan" documents in simultaneous use for Wrocław that have been adopted by regional and local authorities. These are: the spatial development plan for the Wrocław functional area (as an element of regional spatial development plan – *Plan zagospodarowania* …, 2020) and *Integrated Territorial Investments* (as an implementation of Regional Operational Programme – Regionalny Program…, 2015). The first describes the goals of territorial development in Wrocław and surrounding municipalities. It is strongly embedded in the hierarchical structure of the public administration: it is approved by the voivodship marshal's office and must be obeyed by lower levels of administration. The second document is also prepared by the Institute of Territorial Development, but it is implemented by Wrocław Municipality office. It promotes sustainable development of functional urban areas and provides appropriate funding procedures. Its values for metropolitan governance are limited, though: it is prepared in consultation with various national, regional and local stakeholders, but the final decision is made by the European Commission.

Neither of the documents provides any political instruments for common management of Wrocław metropolitan area. However, they build an important basis (or reference) for potential future solutions for metropolitan governance. The need for such governance has recently been expressed by Jacek Sutryk, the mayor of Wrocław City: "we want to relieve the national authorities who seem not to appreciate the role of metropolises" (Wroclaw … 2019). In April 2019, the Wrocław Metropolitan Area was established as a union of 50 local governments. This body is expected to provide a platform for cooperation, but its activity has so far been limited. It seems to be just a new label for a well-known settlement structure and does not really introduce any new content to the metropolitan debate.

6.7. Stockholm

The Swedish capital grew from around 300,000 in 1900 to more than 800,000 in 1960. However, the next decades witnessed a population decline to 647,000 in 1980. Since then, the population has been growing and reached 974,000 at the end of 2019. The region Stockholms län (i.e. "region of Stockholm") has 2.4 million inhabitants. Stockholm is the core part of a larger, relatively densely populated area (by Swedish standards) called Mälardalen: it stretches 240 km to the west from Stockholm and includes 3.7 million people. However, this wider region has a total land surface of 34,500 km^2, similar to many smaller countries in Europe.

Stockholm became the capital of Sweden centuries ago; this has concentrated governmental functions as well as other functions of national importance and activities in the city. Moreover, the headquarters of leading industries and the financial sector further support the prominence of the city in relation to other parts of the country. The city has a high number of innovative industries, and research and higher education facilities. Moreover, the city is the national centre for culture and media and of course a strong political hub. Due to deindustrialisation, Stockholm lost many jobs and

the population declined; however, since the early 1980s, the city has experienced marked progress.

The first example of municipal cooperation took place in 1908 when Stockholm invited the neighbouring municipalities to begin the establishment of a joint regional plan. A more committed cooperation came with new legislation after World War Two; in 1952, the Greater Stockholm regional planning authority was set up. It included Stockholm and 46 other municipalities. A municipal reform in 1971 produced a new regional body called "Region Stockholm". A council, directly elected by the population, started governing the region. The main tasks of this authority are public transport, health services and regional planning. The region has the competence to decide the level of a regional income tax to finance its activities.

The Stockholm region and the municipalities also cooperate with neighbouring municipalities and regions west of Stockholm. The name of this cooperation is Mälardalsrådet, i.e. the council of Mälar Valley. It is a cooperating body financed by the members (5 regions and 56 municipalities). The regions and municipalities appoint members of the council; the council has around 200 members who meet once a year. A board of 17 members governs the council. Their main tasks are to provide cooperation between the administrative units (regions and municipalities), to support the competitiveness of the Mälardal region and to promote innovation and improvement in infrastructure.

The Mälardal region is the core Swedish region; 40% of the national population lives there and it produces nearly half of the national GDP. The inter-municipal character of the cooperation gives the city of Stockholm a strong position; it is by far the largest member and, moreover, hosts the main institutions behind research, financial services, higher education, business services and a good deal of the headquarters of large Swedish corporations. The volunteer basis also means that the national government have no legal right to interfere, although other means of influence are also powerful.

Thus, Stockholm has both a legally based authority for regional cooperation, the Stockholm region and a more informal forum (Mälardalsrådet). However, the two organisations seem to supplement each other well. A major reason for this positive evaluation of their relationship may simply stem from the fact that the whole region is in a positive phase of growth: employment, population and economic turnover have grown considerably. The international position of the region is also quite strong. The regional plan towards 2050 foresees a population growth of 50%; this will offer all municipalities chances for continuous growth – a situation much easier to handle than stagnation or even decline.

Stockholm represents a hybrid; the "old" metropolitan government does exist, but is supplemented by a more business-oriented organisation, which includes a much larger area than the continuous, built-up Greater Stockholm. The Stockholm Län runs services such as public transport, planning, health services and some cultural activities, while responsibility for attracting business activities, innovation and promotion of the local economy today reside with the Mälardalsrådet.

7. Discussion

The analysis of seven examples of metropolitan governance presented above may bring some confusion due to the variety of policy solutions adapted around the world and due to the different stages of development of particular metropolises. A juxtaposition of those local characteristics may bring some light to this knowledge (Table 1).

The overview of the seven metropolises offers a comprehensive and diverse insight into the solutions existing in metropolitan governance. Despite the selection of examples having been purposive (not random) in this paper, it seems to bring some new knowledge into the state-of-the art, and in particular into the search for political cohesion.

While each case is unique due to the context and pathway, the metropolises considered in this paper do share some similarities. They have all passed through an industrial and economic restructuring that challenged existing governance arrangements. They have all taken part in institutional changes to meet new demands and challenges. There is a remarkable difference between metropolises such as Stockholm and Wroclaw, which have a relatively stable institutional setup compared to others such as Copenhagen and Rotterdam. The latter have

Table 1. List of specific features of the metropolises under scrutiny

Metropolis Population	Metropolitan body (year established)	Authority / documents	Character
London 8,900,000	Greater London Authority (1999)	London Mayor / London Plan	Obligatory: local councils must comply with the plan
Rotterdam 2,700,000	Metropolitan Region of Rotterdam-The Hague (2015)	Two committees: one directing the formal top-down responsibility and one bottom-up directing the voluntary inter-municipal cooperation	Soft coordination and carefully designed balance of powers
Copenhagen 2,300,000	Capital region and Region Zealand (2007)	Directly elected councillors with limited competences	Obligatory, limited competences
Toronto 7,800,000	Greater Golden Horseshoe (2006)	Lieutenant Governor in Council / Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe	Obligatory, targets consulted with all tiers of government
Hannover 1,700,000	Greater Hannover (2001)	Regional president	Power balance between participating municipalities
Wroclaw 1,200,000	Wrocław Metropolitan Area (2019)	-	Voluntary cooperation in selected areas
Stockholm 3,700,000	Mälardal (1992)	Generalsekreterare / Regional plan defining common strategic goals within infrastructure, transport and knowledge development	Both a legal based authority and an informal forum

Source: authors' own study

experienced several institutional changes. Similarly, the selected cities differ in terms of relative "autonomy"; national capitals generally always have the attention of the state, such as Copenhagen or London, while provincial cities enjoy more freedom from central government involvement. Of course, this can be either an advantage or the opposite, depending on specific conditions.

In general, there is a clear tension between metropolitan authorities and local governments, as well as between the metropolitan tier and the national/provincial tier. Most countries and governments do recognise the need for a strong city-region or metropolitan body to join forces and get a critical mass. However, the willingness of central government to transfer competences to lower tiers of government is obvious, though not wholehearted. Moreover, and related to this, metropolitan governments work in an insecure environment – in the case of Rotterdam and Toronto they work in an undefined terrain between the local and provincial government, while in other cases (Copenhagen) they operate between strong local governments and central government.

Hannover has developed a coherent and generally accepted form of metropolitan government – perhaps prepared by many former versions of city-regional cooperation in the past. The important fact that suburban municipalities are in a majority in the council appears to be a crucial factor. This has reduced the fear of the suburban that the core city will dictate policies in practice. Thus, Hannover metropolitan authority has strong competences without losing the ability to act flexibly.

It is clear from this and many other studies that nation states have taken a new and more active position in politics: the state is no longer merely giving the rules and handing over the initiatives to key economic and social actors; the state itself is at the heart of the policy implementation. It has shifted from reactive to proactive, it develops and implements new objectives and forms coalitions with strategic partners. In this regard, the aim is to

promote the competitiveness of the nation, and here the metropolises do have a key role.

Finally, the issue of single- or multi-purpose metropolitan bodies: reducing the role of metropolitan administration to providers of essential services (e.g. water, electricity, health services or public transport) leaves no room for trade-offs. The Copenhagen Regional Council is almost reduced to simple service delivery. As such, the risk is sub-optimising, putting more attention on the bottom-line budget rather than considering the public interest. Thus, it is less obvious why elected politicians must lead the organisation when the guiding principle is to maximise profit.

8. Conclusions

We can never find perfect, transparent institutional design for metropolitan governance. But this does not mean that no reasonably satisfactory solutions can ever be found. The literature review presented in this paper proves that metropolitan governance requires political influence, institutional leadership, recognition of regional impact and cooperation within territorial policies. All those issues contribute to the overall metropolitan political cohesion, i.e. collaborative public governance, which offers tailored managerial solutions for development in line with the subsidiarity principle and the place-based approach.

The core issue of this paper is how various governments in Europe and North America meet the cardinal question of metropolitan cohesion: how to provide a resilient match between the functional urban region and the administrative structure. In other words: how can metropolitan authorities avoid internal friction and rivalry when different areas have various (sometimes contradictory) interests? How can they prevent some parts of their subordinate areas from freewheeling at the costs of others?

The answers to those questions are not straightforward. Metropolitan authorities all over the world manage exceptionally complex systems, where the diversity of actors, complexity of relations and interdependences across an extended, fragmented and dynamic metropolitan region restrain governability (see Gordon & Travers, 2010). Each metropolitan area requires a unique political approach, shaping the relationship between its functional urban region and administrative structures. However, despite those differences, some general trends in metropolitan governance may be outlined.

First, metropolitan models observed in the examples follow four main types of governance described in the literature:

- soft coordination (Metropolitan Region of Rotterdam-The Hague and its formal responsibilities transferred from central government combined with the voluntary inter-municipal cooperation; the mix of formal Stockholm Län and informal Mälardalsrådet in Stockholm metropolitan area; the starting Wrocław Metropolitan Area with its bottom-up political initiatives partly embedded in the existing territorial and public funding policies);
- inter-municipal authorities (Toronto with its Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe which enables development targets to be identified in a process of consultation between single-tier, upper-tier and their subordinate lower-tier);
- supra-municipal authorities (Greater London Authority with its power to override planning decisions made by the boroughs; Greater Hannover with its strong competences that prevent single municipalities from developing uncoordinated strategies);
- special status "Metropolitan Cities" (Copenhagen Capital Region with limited competences) close to being a single-purpose organisation (hospital services).

Second, the history of metropolitan governance is an evolution from the wide interest of the public to the narrow interest of economic development, a shift from governing (democratically elected, looking for the welfare and well-being of the population in general) towards governance, where the focus is more shortsighted and narrower in scope ("here and now" benefits for the businesses that create economic growth). The industrial decline around the 1970s promoted the abolition of metropolitan government in many countries; since growth disappeared, the need to coordinate it and prevent uncoordinated

urban development vanished. Consequently, the *raison d'être* for the metro governments was gone. As large cities began to resurge in the late 1980s, the need for coordination and planning to improve competitiveness grew similarly.

Legitimacy – for a long time a dominant view of democratic leaders – has to some degree crumbled; while this does not apply to municipalities or central governments, regional governments seem to be considered mainly as providers of economic growth and employment. This has triggered a call for efficient (business) leadership to take control on the metropolitan level. Additionally, the rise of integrated public–private partnerships and networks has furthermore pushed the general opinion towards a "better efficient than democratic" approach, in line with the neoliberal trend in public policy. Today, privileged groups of business leaders interfere with government leaders in a non-transparent way. Finally, the tendency to set up more steering bodies as single-purpose organisations, i.e. with no trade-offs, has only pushed practice in the same direction.

As a result, the disparities between particular sub-areas of metropolises are likely to grow. The possible conflicts between municipalities competing for development and growth may threaten the legitimacy of metropolitan governments again. In this situation, the need for cohesion becomes more and more urgent. As it has been shown in this paper, the so-called "soft coordination", combining both obligatory (formal) responsibilities and voluntary (informal) cooperation between metropolitan municipalities seems to offer good prospects for shaping cohesion. Of course, balancing the bottom-up initiatives and top-down policies is a big challenge for metropolitan governance, but it may bring an overall resilience of the urban system, may stimulate sustainable, place-based growth and reduce inequalities.

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