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BEST METROPOLISES – BEST DEVELOPMENT CONDITIONS IN EUROPEAN METROPOLISES: PARIS, BERLIN AND WARSAW

Mirosław Grochowski

Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization
Polish Academy of Sciences
Twarda 51/55, 00-818 Warsaw: Poland
e-mail: m.grochowski@uw.edu.pl

Project “Best Metropolises – Best development conditions in European metropolises: Paris, Berlin and Warsaw” (ESPON Targeted Analysis) was implemented from September 2010 till January 2013 by international consortium, that consisted of the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization, Polish Academy of Sciences (lead partner, Warsaw, Poland; members of the team: Mirosław Grochowski – Project Coordinator, Magdalena Górczyńska, Marcin Stępiak, Ewa Korcelli-Olejniczak, Grzegorz Węćławowicz, Przemysław Śleszyński, Piotr Rosik, Dariusz Świątek), Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning (Erkner, Germany; Sabine Zillmer, Christina Minniberger), Paris Region Planning and Development Agency (Paris, France; Martine Liotard), Nordregio – Nordic Centre for Spatial Development (Stockholm, Sweden; Peter Schmitt, Asli Tepecik Dis), and Spiekermann

& Wegener, Urban and Regional Research (Dortmund, Germany; Michael Wegener).

The primary objective of the Project was to identify factors that determine specific development paths of three metropolitan areas: Paris, Berlin and Warsaw. The Project was also expected to provide information on metropolitan development consequences and measures to be used to guide development processes. Studies conducted were focused on the three following themes:

- living conditions and factors that influence the choice of habitual residence in metropolitan areas,
- trends and reasons of intra-metropolitan mobility and mobility between the metropolitan region and adjacent municipalities,
- governance of the metropolitan area.

In order to assess performance of each metropolitan area and for their comparisons five following ‘yardsticks’ were used:

VARIA: PROJECT REPORT

- 1) base strengths in terms of economic development,
- 2) attractiveness in terms of working and living conditions,
- 3) labour force potential & diversified socio-spatial structures,
- 4) multi-dimension accessibility,
- 5) multi-level governance (Figure 1 presents the outcome of assessment).

Results of studies confirmed that the historical paths followed by Paris, Berlin and Warsaw have shaped their presence, unveiling both similarities and differences. The cities share challenges and problems. The structural difficulties of growth concern, above all, the size and position of the respective city within the national and global settlement system, which itself results from the existence of different scales and stages of development and growth, different administrative and governance structures and differing historic reasons of situation in housing and transportation sectors.

The three metropolitan areas belong to different types of metropolitan regions. Paris has very strong position as one of Europe's few World Cities. Berlin's position is that of a partly specialised metropolitan area in the European context (particularly in relation to politics and culture), but with rather weakly developed set of international connections concerning Advanced Producer Service (APS) firms. Warsaw's global connectivity concerning APS firms (in particular finance, law and advertising firms) is much higher than that of Berlin's, although both cities are far behind Paris in this respect. This underlines Warsaw's nodal function for Eastern Europe.

Each metropolitan area has its specific economic structure combining traditional sectors with new ones. Paris has hosted a powerful and diversified tertiary sector for 40 years and stands as a major worldwide business and travel node. Warsaw has benefited from recent developments and has become a major investment destination with a booming tertiary sector. The economy in Berlin was significantly weakened during the years of division of Germany and has become more

focused on the development of a few specialized service industries, including the creative and media industries.

Considering spatial development, two common features might be distinguished in the three metropolitan regions: faster growth of suburban areas than in the whole metropolitan region, and the predominance of the centrifugal directions of displacement of residential suburbanization. Despite the existence of common trends between the three metropolitan areas, the comparison of the magnitude and structure of population growth reveals that Paris and Warsaw require a more complex provision of affordable housing, while the needs of Berlin are more focused on low income inhabitants. Each metropolitan area struggles with a quite different set of demographic issues. The metropolitan area of Paris belongs to the young and growing regions described as having 'family potentials', The Berlin metropolitan area represented the 'challenge of decline' demographic type while Warsaw was classified as representing the 'challenge of labour force' demographic type. However, demographic trends are internally diversified in each metropolitan area.

All three metropolitan areas are composed of numerous commuter towns. In Paris metropolis, both the commuting time and the number of commuters have significantly increased in recent years, which led to particularly high commuting flows and to congestion of traffic. Although in Berlin and Warsaw most places of work is concentrated in the metropolitan city centers, commuting patterns differ in terms of size and directions. Warsaw metropolitan region is the only one of the three metropolises which does not have an interlinked spider's web-like commuting pattern. Paris has a tight and well developed public transport system in the city which is mostly based on the subway and suburban railway connections. The system is however overcrowded in the city centre and suffers from insufficient network development and poor accessibility in the suburbs. Berlin has an efficient public transport network with

a modal split of subways, *S-Bahn*, trams, regional trains and buses which cover not only the city centre but the city as a whole and which is well linked with the neighbouring municipalities and suburbs and their public transport systems.

planning from the Hobrecht plan to the *Berlin-Studie*. Thereafter, however, Berlin effectively withdrew from strategic planning in favour of incrementalist, sectoral planning. The question is whether this is a disadvantage or whether it represents a more successful

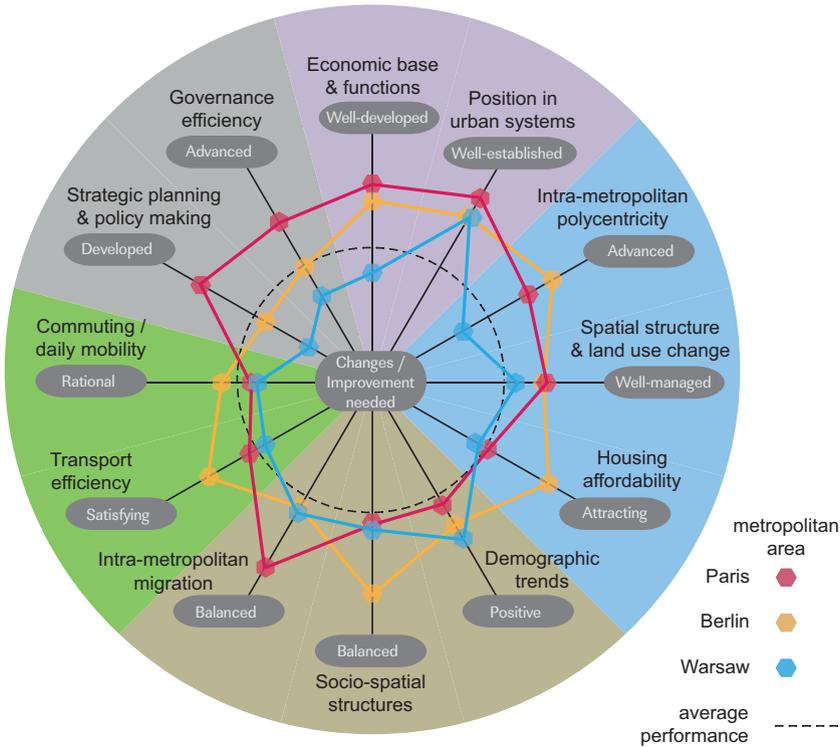


Figure 1. Best Metropolises benchmarking

Source: Best Metropolises. Final report. ESPON 2013.

The three metropolises also differ in the ways in which they plan their future development. Paris has the longest tradition of visionary strategic planning and is also the most active in this field among the studied cities. The history of strategic planning in the Paris region, from Haussmann’s plan to the latest strategic documents, displays a consistent, rationalist, top-down planning system which has had and is likely to continue to have in the future a major impact on the spatial organization of the Paris region. Berlin too has an impressive history of strategic

strategy for a new type of metropolis in the 21st century. Warsaw has, since the political and economic transition of 1989, successfully approached strategic planning taking into account the new challenges and opportunities brought by the market economy. However, it is uncertain whether the region and city governments will be able to harness the strong economic interests of developers and other economic stakeholders and mitigate urban sprawl. The three cities also apply very different modes of strategic spatial planning, from rational top-down planning in the Paris

region to pragmatic incremental decision-making in Berlin.

Metropolitan governance has become a crucial issue for the future development of Paris, Berlin and Warsaw. There is no single European model of metropolitan governance. Results of analysis prove that the governance responses are similar to some extent because they depend on development trends and encountered problems, which are to some degree similar. However, these responses are also differentiated because of different systemic conditions that have impact on public administration organization and distribution of competences, powers, and responsibilities among different tiers of governance. Thus, looking for the best way to guide development processes in metropolises one should think about customizing them to cultural conditions and local context.

Based on the results of studies conducted a set of policy recommendations was formulated. Main recommendations concerned a need:

1) to strengthen functional polycentricity of metropolitan regions that may lead to more balanced distribution of economic activities;

2) to strengthen intra-metropolitan polycentricity to reduce unnecessary movements of people and goods;

3) to support development of social housing, the provision of land for housing development and the appropriate financial mechanisms to support investments in housing;

4) to enlarge scale of investments in the innovative projects dedicated to energy-efficiency of newly constructed buildings;

5) to continue current and initiate new urban renewal programs which shall be an integral parts of urban development policies as measures that may, both directly and indirectly, influence the distribution of inhabitants, migrations flows and the formation of social structures;

6) to facilitate development of transportation system via development of infrastructure and integration of different modes of transport;

7) to encourage introduction of policy making mechanisms and legal conditions that enable close cooperation between local governments in preparation of plans and investments and their implementation.

Making governance efficient 'partnership approach' is required as much as finding new institutional and organizational solutions. Metropolitan tools for coordination of major thematic sectoral policies should be introduced and local public consultation should become a part of policy making process. The creation of specific platforms and/or agencies that facilitate dialogue between different actors are highly recommended. This kind of initiatives strengthens the development of a culture of cooperation.

Assumptions and methodology of the Project as well as its results were presented to and discussed with the stakeholders from Paris, Berlin and Warsaw metropolis during workshops and seminars. Cooperation between researchers and practitioners provided inspiring experience to both groups. The reports with final results of the Project can be found on the ESPON website: www.espon.eu.