

HIGH LEVEL CONFERENCE  
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AND INTEGRATED  
URBAN REGENERATION  
**IN EUROPE**  
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## “EL ENFOQUE INTEGRADO EN LA REGENERACIÓN URBANA”

**Mr. Jan Vranken**

PhD (Political and Social Science)

Head of the Research Unit on Poverty, Social Exclusion and  
The City (OASeS), University of Antwerp,  
Belgium

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# The integrated approach in Urban Regeneration

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Prof. dr Jan Vranken

Universiteit Antwerpen



# What is Urban Regeneration?

- Common elements in definitions
  - **Comprehensive** and **integrated** vision *and* action
  - To **check** processes of economic, environmental, social & cultural **decline**
  - That **bring with them** ( → ) decay of the **built** environment
  - **Aims** at a **lasting** improvement in the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of an area
- The concept of regeneration is absent from the **Leipzig Charter**, but the reality is very much present
- Urban and rural regeneration is an objective of the **Regional Fund 2007-2013**



# Old wine in new bottles?

- Another word for urban renewal?
  - Already in 1961, Jane Jacobs published one of the strongest critiques on contemporary large-scale **urban renewal**: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*
- Urban renewal is considered responsible for
  - the destruction of existing communities
  - social exclusion and displacement
  - pollution
  - replacement housing – particularly in the form of housing towers – might be difficult to police, leading to an increase in crime.
  - Urban renewal is usually non-consultative.



## Or: re-generation

- Does it imply that trust is put in the **own resources** of an area (city, neighbourhood) to regenerate itself?
- And that **policy interventions** (including forms of governance) are only successful if they take account of these conditions?
- What then is the **relation** between this 'structural' and the 'policy-making' dimension in urban regeneration?



# Regeneration versus sustainability?

- Urban regeneration and sustainable development have emerged as **parallel strands** of urban policy
- However, there has been **little co-ordination** between them
- Does all urban regeneration contribute to sustainability?
- Is it sufficient to focus on
  - the recycling of derelict land and buildings,
  - reducing demand for peripheral development
  - facilitating the development of more compact cities.



# The Janus face of the city

- The city as
  - A **dumping place** of problems – to be avoided
  - A bundle of **opportunities** – to be fostered
- Paradigmatic shift in the last decades from the former to the latter
- But **both features** are characteristic of urban reality – of course
- The question is: **how to integrate both** in a urban regeneration strategy – of the **urban governance** type



# Urban Governance: In-between or Above?

- (More) competition, more (ethnic) diversity, (less) cohesion and (more) spatial dynamics have **increased challenges** faced by urban governments.
- Urban regeneration implies an **integrated approach** as part of urban governance - or of simpler forms of partnerships (cooperation)
- **The model of urban politics** in which urban governments dominated decision-making **has given way to a new context of governance**
  - in which an increasingly **heterogeneous** conglomerate of actors and agencies,
  - with **various** backgrounds and competencies,
  - define and deliver services
  - in a way that is independent from the boundaries of the traditional local government structure



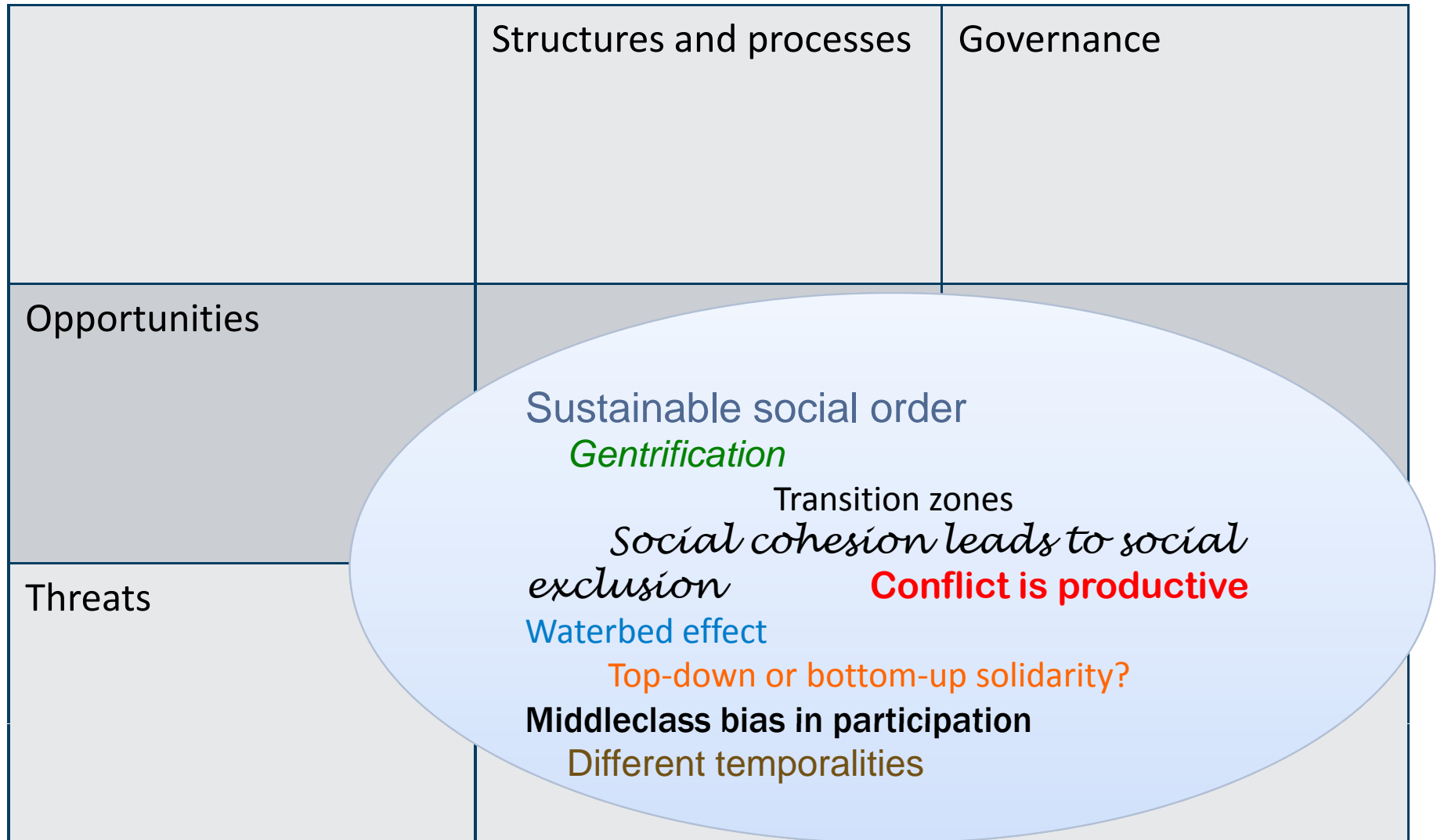
# Is urban governance part of the solution?

Urban governance implies cooperation between ...

- Several **actors** (state, civil society, for-profit enterprises)
  - Relatively **autonomous** with the state as **stage director**
- Several **levels**
  - Neighbourhood/district; city; city region; region; nation state; EU
- Several **domains**
  - Employment, housing, education, health, culture, urban planning
- Some other characteristics
  - A **new political culture** & flexible and responsive administration
  - **Structural participation** of citizens/clients/users
  - **Decentralised** decision-making



# A complex force field





## Some challenges for urban regeneration

- Are areas relevant?
- Neighbourhood won, neighbourhood lost
- It's not the economy (alone)
- On whose side is time?
- Better a good partner
- The people's voice or voice to the people?
- In local authorities we trust
- The darker side of cohesion
- Has solidarity collapsed?
- Guts or brains?



# Are areas relevant?

- Of course they are, otherwise we wouldn't be here

## However

- At what **level** are the target areas of urban regeneration to be defined?
- **How** and **by whom** are they defined?
- How exclusively should urban regeneration focus on **specific** areas?
- What should be done to avoid **displacing problems** from one neighbourhood to another? (the deckchairs or waterbed effect)



# Neighbourhood won, neighbourhood lost

- Certainly today, a city needs **marginal places** ('transition zones') that function as
  - **social laboratories** for the arts, economic entrepreneurship, and social relationships
  - **sites of socialisation** (places of integration) for newcomers who are not yet able to take part in all the formal institutions of mainstream society
- The 'chairs on the deck of the Titanic' or the **waterbed effect**
  - The disappearance of problems in one area often just means that they have moved to another (neighbouring) area.
  - Competition between districts – as for increasing employment opportunities - should remain within limits.



# It's not the economy (alone)

- Being **embedded in formal and informal social networks** is an important factor for social inclusion.
- An important part of **labour market policy** at the district level is trying **both**
  - to equip as **many residents** as possible with the necessary skills to function in an urban service economy
  - and to help them to apply successfully for vacancies in the labour market, no matter where they are located in the **urban region at large**



# On whose side is time?

- What **time span** should urban regeneration programmes cover?
  - How closely should they **reflect** the mandate of local representative institutions?
- How important are the **different time perspectives** or 'temporalities' of actors?
  - The **short-term** perspective of the politicians and the **long-term** perspective of the administration, the professionals, and the research community?
- Does this discrepancy impede on the successful completion of the programme?
- What **after** an urban regeneration programme has come to an end?



# Better a good partner...

- Problems
  - The degree and complexity of policy items (including problems) is increasing
  - The number of actors in urban matters is increasing...
  - and so is the number of policy-making levels
- Is PPP doomed to stand for
  - 'Profits for the Private Partner'
  - 'Problems for the Public Partner'?

(As is the case with the present handling of the economic crisis?)



# The people's voice or voice to the people?

- Is there a straightforward 'ladder of participation'?
- Does it suffice just to **inform** people as 'clients'?
- Or should they participate **directly** in the conception and implementation of projects and programmes – as 'citizens'?
- What if only a **minority** occupies the different channels (acts as **gatekeeper**) and dissenting or weaker voices are made to shut up?
  - The lower educated, single mothers, ethnic minorities, long-term unemployed
  - A middle-class bias is always there?
- How important are 'strong (informal) **leaders**'?



# In local authorities we trust

- Should subsidising authorities **blindly trust** the intentions of local authorities?
- Or is some form of contracts (or **covenants**) needed?
  - In order to specify goals, means, processes, and procedures?
- If so, how 'general' and how 'differentiated' should these contracts be?
- What **period** should they cover?
  - How closely should they reflect the mandate of local representative institutions?



# The darker side of social cohesion

- Cohesion may be supportive **but also...**
  - Constraining, oppressive
  - Preventing social mobility and innovation
  - Excluding
- Illustrations
  - A strong degree of cohesion at the neighbourhood level (**place attachment**) or at the level of local communities might exclude people from opportunities outside the neighbourhood. They are unable to respond to new opportunities.
  - **Identification** with smaller units often stands in the way of identification with a '**higher**' level of social life (cities instead of neighbourhoods, nation state instead of social classes).



# Has solidarity collapsed?

- The sociological problem lies in the (hypothesised) **collapse of**
  - **traditional forms of solidarity**
  - of routines that used to function as **mediators**
  - of (informal) mechanisms of **social control**.
- Is it the weakening or even disappearance of these “spontaneous” routines and reciprocities that have opened the doors for a number of “**top-down**” **initiatives** to replace or to complement them?
- They consist of ‘top-down’ and explicit initiatives - from ‘repressive’ to ‘protective’ (social protection, social services) ones.
- **Are new forms of ‘mechanic’ solidarity** needed to complement the ‘organic’ solidarity that is rooted in the division of labour (Durkheim)?



## The 'repressive' ones are most visible

- Initiatives to 'policy the private and public sphere'
  - social and physical control systems in order to promote safety: CCTV-controlled areas, private security services, the call for 'more police in the street'.
- Less easily identifiable, the success of **mono-cultural discourses** and the increase of legal and other mechanisms to prevent or to combat forms of 'deviant behaviour' (including specific cultural behaviour).
  - Integration debate: shift from 'reciprocal adaptation' to 'adaptation' ('adapt or leave')
  - Treatment of beggars and other 'street folk' is less lenient
  - Young offenders, considered as 'incorrigible', are put in special prisons with as prime function to protect society, no longer to re-educate.
- Initiatives to **promote cohesion** - such as the financing of 'spontaneous' neighbourhood festivities.



# Guts or brains?

- Do intuition, guts, or political feeling provide a firm enough basis to set up and evaluate urban policies?
- ... or are more sophisticated means needed?
- If so, what are the **minimum requirements** with respect to
  - baseline measurement
  - databases
  - qualitative and quantitative indicators
  - and evaluation procedures
- What role for the Leipzig Charter and for the **Reference Framework for Sustainable Cities**
- Some (adapted) form of **Open Method of Coordination** could also foster the meeting of these requirements



# Spread the good word

- What can we learn from **past** experiences?
- What can be learned from **other countries**?
- How should knowledge be **stored** and **disseminated**?
- How can positive results be **sustained**?