

# Social Cohesion Within Sustainable Cities

A French-German joint initiative  
From the Leipzig Charter to a common European sustainability framework?  
DASL – SFU, Marne la Vallée 13. June 2008



Photo Andreas  
Schoelzel:  
Integration  
and Migration  
in Berlin, 2005

Prof. Dr. Rotraut Weeber, DASL,  
Weeber+Partner Institute for Urban Planning and Social Research, Stuttgart/Berlin

My title-page may not be understood by everyone:

"We are also the people" - "Wir sind auch das Volk", this was the chant at a non-violent demonstration, that led to peaceful revolution and to German reunification.

Here, a Berliner of apparently Turkish origin demonstrates with the statement: "We are also the people".

## 1. Without Social Cohesion, No Sustainable Development

### Urbanity – Civilized Living Together, Richness of Diversity



## 1. Without Social Cohesion, No Sustainable Development

I am talking about Social Cohesion – social togetherness – which is the basis of sustainable development.

Without social harmony and a population who is interested in prosperous cohabitation sustainably – and also a good economy - are not possible.

We have all noticed the effects connected with globalisation and it is generally perceived that segregating forces in society are becoming stronger.

Poverty is being passed down from generation to generation on an ever broadening scale. In some neighborhoods the majority of children grow up speaking a different language and are growing up in a milieu and life of unemployment..

The segregation of the poor and the rich in our cities is increasing and the lack of intergration is glaringly obvious – the migrants live in societies of their own, often in deprived neighborhoods where poverty and resignation are wide spread.

It is especially cities that are being increasingly challenged to provide cohesion. The ability to encourage harmonious coexistence lies squarely with the cities themselves and no other social or governmental rank can replace this function.

The picture shows the opposite, the situation of urbanity.

## 2. Strengthening the Local Level – Integrated Action Plans in Disadvantaged Areas



### 2. Strengthening the Local Level – Implementing Intergrated Action Plans in Disadvantaged Areas.

This is the target of the Social City programme in Germany – to develop disadvantaged neighborhoods.

It was conceptualised as a collaborative programme between national and state government during the 1990's and was finally launched in 2000.

This programme was a German pacesetter - the forerunner for a new and promising planning approach in Germany.

- Collaboration of social and building projects.
- Active participation of the population
- Involvement of all stakeholders
- Integrated planning and realisation (not planning for years and starting action later, but instead starting with first steps from the beginning)
- Obligatory cooperation

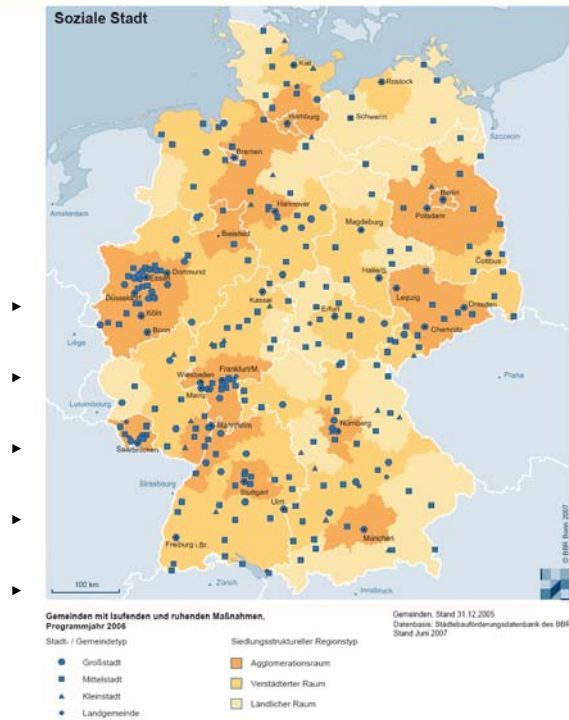
This triggered a spirit of optimism. It was also met with resounding approval from the german public, who endorsed the move to become increasingly engaged in the strenthening of deprived areas and meeting obvious unsettling social problems in the population.

Pictures: Information, development of the environment, important projects for identification, community events, participation of children in the planning of playgrounds, consulting and vocational training for small corner-shops.

### 3. Nothing Happens Without Money and Commitment. And: the Power of Money.

aÿxÿr ~ ~ v#lçtzr) #P <#z #EEH#  
 \_vzysçöÿççuf#z  
 CIF# #zvf# #rsçösh#DDB#  
 ^ z)z i #öÿç#dçs fzu <#  
 9vjvr#CAAG#

“ ” çç > z) r) f) s) u) s) i) v) ç) v) s) z) s) @ | r) s) i) @



### 3. Nothing Happens Without Money and Commitment.

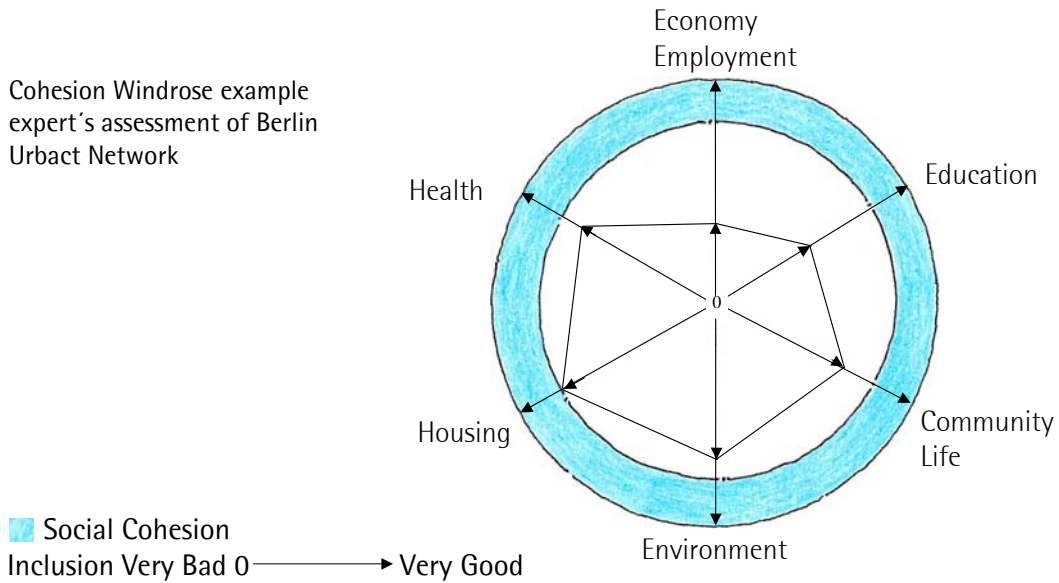
To give subsidies in connection with the obligation to realize the new approaches of participation and so on. This helps very much to try harder and do better. We all know this.

Disadvantaged neighbourhoods have an special entitlement for the best general conditions to enable intergration. It is the people of these deprived communities who undertake social cohesion on behalf of the entire city, as apposed to the residents of well-off suburbs. It is for this reason that we need to provide them the best conditions to enable this to happen, i.e the best schools, the best teachers ect. But we also know that the allocation of infrastructure and the funds made avilible for maintenance, renovation and upkeep of facilities in disadvantaged areas is often below average.

The Social City programme is currently the best-resourced restructuring programme in Germany. When cities wish to receive public funds for urban regeneration, they have the best chances through this programme – this means they are obliged to spring into action in deprived neighborhoods, intensively accompany citizens though the process and they must combine building and social measures.

### 4. More Inclusion in All Important Fields of Life – Involvement and Proactiveness of the People Action Fields to Strengthen Social Cohesion

Cohesion Windrose example  
expert's assessment of Berlin  
Urbact Network



#### 4. Action Fields to Strengthen Social Cohesion

In Europe today, cohesion is operationalised by people's inclusion in all the important areas of life.

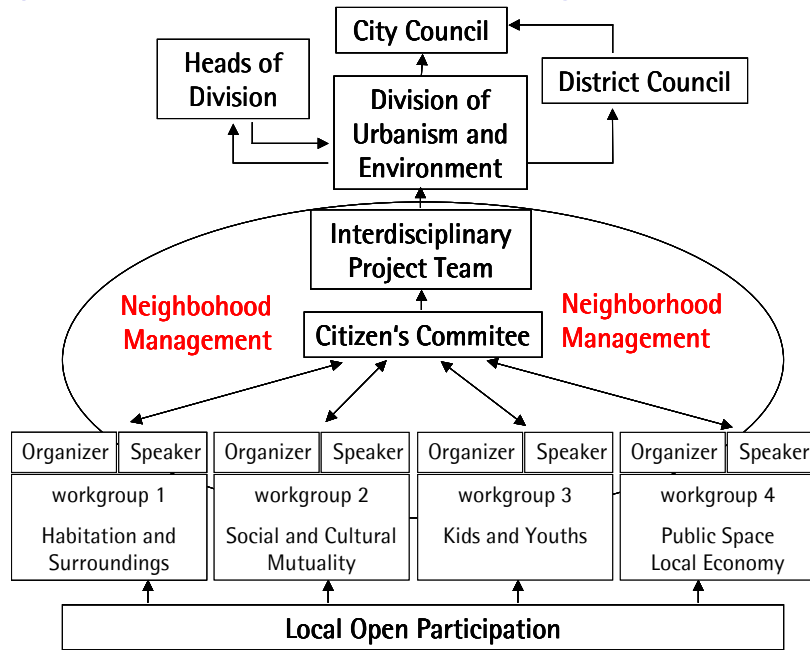
With that the approaches used to tackle poverty have changed very much. Instead of only giving money and care for the poor, we now support them to become more proactive amongst themselves – we help them to develop projects from the bottom up.

The philosophies of Bourdieu and Putnam were the source of important ideas. They showed us the importance of social capital – the networks amongst the people and cultural capital – education, language, civil culture and so on. This benefit to the single persons themselves as well as to the community.

This multidimensional understanding of poverty is also the scientific argument for the integrated approach against poverty. It is highly proven how the different aspects of poverty strengthen each other.

5. Making Participation a Matter of Course.

Participation and Inclusion: Considering Citizen's Concerns



5. Making Participation a Matter of Course.

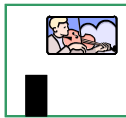
To help people along the road to being proactive, we need a culture of participation. And for this we need stable structures to disseminate in all departments of the city.

In the areas where Social City is involved, the cities launch a neighbourhood management team.

Some positions are filled by employed staff, third-sector personnel and volunteers are included and one part of the team often reflects the ethnic diversity of the concerned area. The teams mostly work on site, where they often run information and meeting points. They manage the coordination and participation processes involving local stakeholders. They also support the citizens to realise their own ideas. In most cases, the neighbourhood management teams also elaborate area-based development concepts. The action plans also serve to report to the citizens' council, who decide over general strategies and money.

6. Learning from the Social City Approach: working together beyond the bounds of administrative divisions, hierarchy and competence

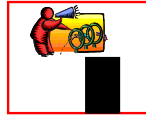
Example: Sports and Cultural Centre – no longer a centre only for sports ▶ Project Enhancement



Modernization of an old multi-purpose gymnasium



Building of a new gymnasium



Additional multifunctional room



Lunch and info-point 1)



Serving and maintenance 2)



Educational and cultural activities, citizens advice 3)



Local neighborhood boards and working groups 4)



Ludwigsburg Eglosheim

6. Learning from the Social City approach: How we can work together beyond the bounds of administrative divisions, hierarchy and competence – and also together with other institutions such as the Federal Employment Office (*Arbeitsamt*).

Example: Project Enhancement – in Ludwigsburg Eglosheim, where Weeber+Partner was tasked with the neighbourhood management.

1. They offer warm and affordable meal three days a week, the room is also an information and meeting point for the volunteers.
2. Project pushing for the qualification and support of unemployed women.
3. Different social organisations, volunteers, sports, live-long learning and advise are made available.
4. „Round table“ - Stable organisation to enable the coordination of a local action plan.

## 7. Learning How to Involve People, Also Those With Low Education

### Participation, Projects, Networking



Meanwhile, a lot of experience has been gained as to what one can do to encourage citizens to participate – not only those of the middle-class, but also people lacking in money and education. It is a lot of work, complex and not at all easy, but it's worth it. It creates so called social and cultural capital, something which we greatly need in our cities – especially in the deprived areas.

Important aspects are:

- To undertake networking.
- To have a presence on the ground, in the neighborhood concerned. A lead person to do the job.
- To work among and contact the different social groups involved, to find people who are able to further multiply the contacts and ideas.

It often works effectively to give neighborhoods responsibility over a community-budget. People have the opportunity to conduct wholehearted discussions within their neighbourhood-boards about which projects would be good and where the money would be best invested – these groups often evolve into longterm independent neighbourhood-initiatives. (good practice in Berlin)

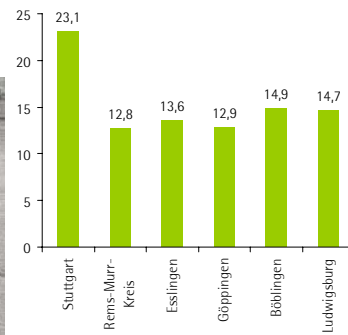
We should also never underestimate the positive effect had by the realisation of a project though the efforts of residents themselves. Outwards they display a sense of kindness and inwardly they have personally participated in a key learning experience.

Pictures show a selection of different methods

- Common city walks to discuss the problems, directly at the places concerned.
- Planning workshops, with groups of women.
- A report on traffic problems – community works together with the police.



## 8. To Prevent Further Segregation and Further Weakening of Urban Districts



Percentage of Foreigners in Region and City Stuttgart

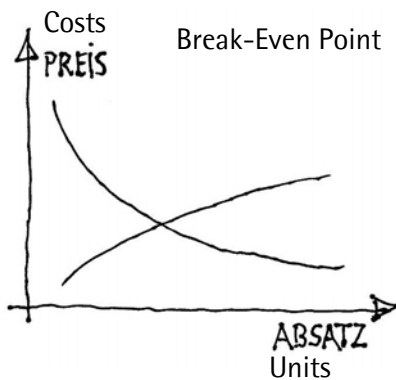


8. The question of how to prevent further segregation and weakening of urban districts.

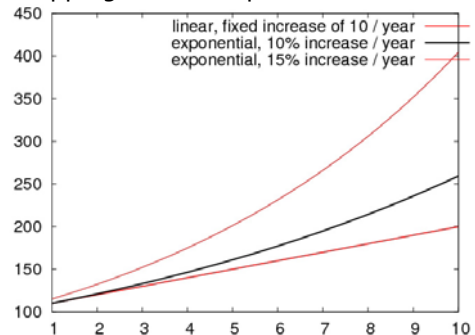
This leads us to the relations undertaken on a regional level.

This leads us also to the need of monitoring.

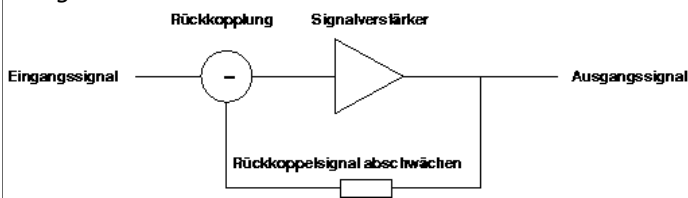
### 9. The Possibilities to Make These Concepts Mainstream



Tipping Point – Exponential Function



Negative Feedback



Tug-of-War



### 9. Integrated approaches to project development: what does it mean?

We always need to ask: are the objectives, intentions, methods and finances at least harmonised?

Or better still: Do they support each other? How can we get more synergy?

We should ask, if the intended projects are serving multi-layered goals and benefits, or if they only serve an isolated single.

What weakens their effect? On the other side: Will anything be impacted negatively by the project?

The advantages of integrated approaches are obvious, but also not at all easy to realise.

Here are pictures showing some of the problems:

For example: we try hard, but we don't reach the break-even point

Or, we don't reach the tipping point.

When we want to develop integrated planning strategies or projects or negative feedback weakens the results.

Or all the efforts result in a tug-of-war.

The chances of integrated approaches are not at all exhausted.