Towards a Balanced Metropolitan Governance
Combating the "Back-door" Status of Peripheral Rural Areas

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The main results of the study bring evidence for the peripheralization of rural areas situated in the second ring of the metropolitan area.

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Introduction

EVEN IF urban centers provide better job opportunities and good service delivery, their rapid expansion faces spatial limitations. Therefore, cities become reliant not only on the land but also the human as well as environmental resources of their surrounding rural territories. As a consequence, these spatial and sectoral flows result in linkages between the rural and urban territories, a process which requires a balanced and integrative approach in order to exploit the strengths and opportunities that rural-urban linkages can offer. Nevertheless, their interdependent relationship and synergistic effect (Elmqvist et al. 2016; Hamilton 2014) are repeatedly neglected by their governance systems which constantly fail to involve local stakeholders from peripheral rural areas in the planning and development of the metropolitan area. As a consequence, the peri-urban interface is left

to marginalized local authorities which only function as a "back door" for the urban center, providing it with various resources and space without benefiting from infrastructure developments, service delivery, financial mechanisms or even active involvement in decision-making processes as members of the metropolitan area. Therefore, in order to achieve territorial cohesion and eliminate the marginalization of peripheral actors, an integrative metropolitan governance is crucial. Against this background, in its first section the paper provides a review of the concepts of periphery, peripheralization and integrative governance from a metropolitan perspective. By contrasting these concepts and approaching them from a practical perspective, the second section of the paper draws on experiences of local decision makers, urban planners and academics from the Cluj Metropolitan Area.

Metropolitan Governance: Changing Conceptions

THE FORCES of globalization have not only led to the rapid growth of cities but they also changed their nature and texture. More and more people are moving from rural to urban settlements hoping for better job and study opportunities, social interaction and improved public services. Nevertheless, this rapid urbanization has its own downbacks as well, which lead to issues of social, environmental challenges that call for remedies from those responsible for the management, planning and development of urban areas.

On the other hand, we must consider the socio-economic connections, the spatial as well as the functional relations between the core cities and their surrounding areas (Vasanen 2013), their interdependent relationship to one another as well as their synergistic effect (Elmqvist et al. 2016; Hamilton 2014) as metropolitan areas become decisive factors in the global economic growth. Therefore, in order to enhance this process and exploit the strengths and opportunities that rural-urban linkages can offer, governance at the metropolitan level becomes crucial.

Although the concept of governance and its understanding has changed over the years and it is no longer considered as a state-centered practice only (Benn 2009), there is still concern about its implementation at a metropolitan level, especially regarding the fragmented approaches towards the management of urban growth and its socio-economic consequences (Gleeson et al. 2004).

According to Pierre (2011) the governance approach entails a lower importance of the formal local government structures and raises attention on how public and private entities are supported in delivering common interests. As a consequence, there is an increasing pressure on local authorities and decision

makers to respond to the challenges presented by the regional economies and to look beyond their administrative and political boundaries (Hamilton 2014) in order to strengthen social cohesion and promote sustainable metropolitan development.

Next to this, according to Rydin (2010, 47) governance is a policy system which is articulated through the organization of various stakeholder networks with the aim of delivering means of rightfulness, reveal new forms of resources and resolve issues by using innovative solutions. However, governance is not responsible for capacity building within the various government establishments, but rather it has to support the involvement and consultation of numerous stakeholders on decisions regarding development and public policy regulation within the overall area (Kübler 2005).

Nevertheless, several metropolitan areas face problems of local government fragmentation and face limitations regarding the cooperation process. More-over, the complex interactional modes between the networks, the interdependencies and the increasing movement between the urban-rural settlements of the metropolitan area aggravate the process of metropolitan governance (Williams 1999). Consequently, as Phares (2009) points out, if only a few local governments refuse to cooperate over a specific issue, the efforts for tackling effectively and sustainably problems for the metropolitan area as a whole will prove to be inefficient. The need for local initiatives to be part of and connected to a complex multi-scalar system where they have sustainable implications and effects at different scales (Carr and Affolderbach 2014) brings pressure on intergovernmental relations. In addition, the interests presented by various actors, stakeholders and institutions must be structured or planned in ways that serve shared values and long-term common benefits. Nevertheless, as long as there is a division between center and periphery, the inequalities are not diminished and the conflicts of interest will dominate the governance practice and throw back the governance perspective on a metropolitan scale. As Brenner (2004)—based on the studies of Veltz (1996)—points out, the metropolitanization process brought economic growth and better development capacities that concentrate in major metropolitan regions, on the one hand, but intensified territorial disparities, on the other, as the benefits are largely experienced by the core urban regions, leaving the peripheral areas lagging behind and in certain cases marginalized (Boudreau et al. 2006).

The Concept of Periphery and Peripheralization from a Metropolitan Perspective

THE CONCEPT of periphery has been proposed by different polarization and world-system theories as a socio-spatial category in subordinated relation to the core spaces (Benedek and Moldovan 2015). In terms of spatial planning and within the urban-rural bias it is frequently viewed as contrary to or a product of the asymmetry of the core (Lang et al. 2015) and, according to Kühn (2015, 368), it mainly refers to "sparsely populated rural regions, border regions or the suburban fringes of cities."

According to Blowers and Leroy (1994) the view created about a peripheral community is connected to a spatial basis that is physically distant from and hardly connected to the dominant area. However, as Lang (2012) points out, when considering the development in a certain area this must not be reduced only to processes within its geographical position or spatial boundaries, but needs to be seen on a multi-scalar level where peripheries in their overall understanding are "the result of societal processes of peripheralization and not as a structural condition of space" (Lang 2012, 1749). Therefore, even if the term indicates a distance between a declining, challenged area and a well-developed, strengthened core, the changing nature of temporal and spatial conditions over a certain area must not be disregarded.

These spatial implications over a certain period of time result in a process referred to as peripheralization by those dealing with spatial planning and development (Blowers and Leroy 1994; Lang 2012; Bernt and Colini 2013; Fischer-Tahir and Naumann 2013). When talking about peripheralization several academics employ the work of Henri Lefebvre on space as a social product, and reflect on the implications that social relations have on the production and shaping of space. Therefore, the process of peripheralization is not a standalone sequence (Leibert 2013) but a systematic consequence of economic, demographic, political and facility concentration within a metropolitan center to the detriment of other marginalized—in many cases rural—areas (Fischer-Tahir and Naumann 2013). On the other hand, Lang (2012) argues that the process is dependent on discursive practices about what spatial division is seen as peripheral or central and not necessarily on its structural arrangement. Nevertheless, the concept is closely related to the academic debate about uneven development which, according to Bernt and Colini (2013), creates peripheries with reduced connectivity, economically less viable, depopulated and politically more reliant and therefore largely dependent on the metropolitan core. This is why Blowers and Leroy (1994, 203) consider that communities living in peripheral areas

are not only remote in terms of geographical location but also considered to be "economically marginal, politically powerless and socially homogeneous." Therefore, in a detailed understanding and from a regional perspective, Naumann and Reichert-Schick (2013, 147) see these mostly rural peripheral areas characterized by outmigration with "poor transport facilities, few and lowly qualified jobs, and limited opportunities for economic development." However, these characteristics do not define the periphery as stand-alone features.

Conversely, it is important to remark that, next to the spatial inequalities, peripherality is influenced by temporal inequalities, which leads us to the understanding that it is not a static concept or process (Naumann and Reichert-Schick 2013; Török 2015; Kühn 2015), but it must be seen as a dynamic, relational (Lang 2012) and reversible notion (Leibert and Golinsky 2016) which creates the possibility for developing changeable conditions for the actors involved (Kühn 2015) and presents circumstances for becoming so-called non-peripheral. This way of understanding peripheralization involves the concept of "marginalization" which, although seemingly close in its meaning, is understood by Müller (2013) as a multiscale process which brings a set of cultural, economic, political, social disadvantages for the involved actors.

Another aspect that touches upon the functional meaning of peripherality is the reflection on the different types through which it can manifest itself. Kühn (2015) in his theoretical analysis of this topic underlines three approaches that include economic polarization, social inequality and political power. Next to this, Blowers and Leroy (1994) associate peripheral communities with four characteristics: remoteness, economic marginality, powerlessness, culture of acceptance, and environmental degradation. It is not the aim of this paper to elaborate on these concepts. Nevertheless, the relevance and reasoning behind the reference to them is to highlight that both peripheralization and marginalization signify socio-spatial disparities and unbalanced spatial development. This understanding supports the fact that peripheralization is in relation to a process of centralization which rests on uneven spatial development.

Therefore, within the field of spatial planning as a means to retain the intensification of centralization, the European Union in its Territorial Agenda 2020 (Kühn 2015) and in the EU Commission's Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion (Lang et al. 2015) endeavors for polycentric and balanced spatial development in a multi-scalar system. As a consequence, several member states introduced a different settlement structure, the metropolitan areas, in order to promote them as growth centers in the globalized economy (Kühn 2015).

Integrated Metropolitan Governance

AT THE EU level, the necessity for an integrated approach to urban planning was first stressed in 2007 in the Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, which has raised the attention upon the necessity for common principles and strategies in the development process and planning policy of European cities. The challenges however consist in recognizing the issues of the urban development process, understanding the conditions and developing such plans, strategies and initiatives which are able to tackle these problems in an integrative manner.

Although the Europe 2020 Strategy stresses the importance of an integrated place-based approach which indicates the need for cooperation and coordination between different actors at diverse government levels, there is still a need to create a context for integrated governance on a metropolitan level.

The concept of integrated urban governance is an ever-evolving one, being defined and expressed in various ways; the term is rarely used as such in the academic or policy-making discourse. Nevertheless, it has various synonyms conceptualized from a policy-making approach. For example, as Schwedler (2011, 11) relates, the UNECE and WHO (Stead and Jong 2006) use the notion of "policy integration" or "cross-cutting policy making" in the view of the United Kingdom Cabinet Office (2000). Alternatively, several individual writers mention the term "concerted decision-making" (Warren et al. 1974), or as an alternative, the term "policy coordination" (Challis et al. 1988) or even "linked policy frameworks" (Wheeler 2000).

Even though many of these terms vary from each other they all cover several common points such as: coordination not only between specific departments of the local authorities but also among the various levels of the governance systems; political organizing and leadership; development of effective regional institutions; involvement of different stakeholders such as civil society or businesses into the decision-making process; holistic political approach towards strategic planning as well as long-term visions and sustainability oriented planning (Schwedler 2011, 11).

Cluj Metropolitan Area (CMA)

IN ROMANIA, the EU accession brought new challenges related to the urban phenomena. The Romanian growth pole program initiated in 2008 can be considered as a top-down initiative aimed at decreasing regional disparities (Benedek 2016). In terms of territorial governance, it has led to the establishment of metropolitan areas (Grigorescu et al. 2012), as voluntary associations

between an urban core settlement and the neighboring rural and suburban areas (Benedek 2016). In the case of Cluj Metropolitan Area (CMA), it comprises the core city Cluj-Napoca (around 320,000 inhabitants) and two rings or belts of rural settlements: the first ring (directly neighboring the core area and made up of 5 communes) and the second ring (directly neighboring the first ring, but less accessible from the core city, and made up of 12 communes).

Even though the commitment behind the approach was to facilitate an easier access to EU funding and to promote cooperation between the parties concerned, a number of dilemmas emerged regarding the process, which require significant effort to promote metropolitan-wide, effective governance. In specific terms, the increasing jurisdictional fragmentation of metropolitan areas might question the regional thinking (Wheeler 2000) and the possible peripheralization of certain rural areas. A significant example of such efforts is presented by Cluj Metropolitan Area, founded in December 2008, which comprises the municipality of Cluj-Napoca and 17 communes.

Methodology

THE MAIN research question that this paper aims to answer is: to what extent does integrative governance eliminate the peripheralization of the rural actors of the metropolitan area? In order to answer this question, the research methodology covers three phases. First, it involves a desk research of scientific references and policy outlines related to the topic. In this section concepts such as periphery, peripheralization, or integrated governance are analyzed from a specific metropolitan perspective. In the second phase, a total of twenty-three semi-structured interviews are conducted with various planners, decision makers and academics actively involved in the decision-making and planning process of Cluj Metropolitan Area. A total of fifteen representatives from the local authorities of the metropolitan area have been interviewed. Next to this, two representatives from each the academic sphere, the Regional Development Agency, the County Council and the Association for the Metropolitan Area of Cluj were asked questions related to the research topic. The main questions formulated in the interview guide are built around four themes: the dysfunctions of the metropolitan area, the existence of a common vision and plans shared by different players, the drawing forces of competition or cooperation and the pretention for institutionalization or dialog on a metropolitan scale. The third stage is completed by analyzing and assessing the qualitative aspects of the integrated metropolitan governance system in Cluj with regard to tendencies of peripheralization.

The Existing Situation, Dysfunctions within the Metropolitan Area

IN ORDER to identify the existing issues and those believed to be most urgent to act on within the metropolitan area, the interviewees were asked to highlight three main dysfunctions of their area. The most frequently mentioned problem was infrastructure, and in a narrower context almost 90% of the respondents highlighted the bad condition or shortage of road infrastructure, on the one hand, and mobility, on the other. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that both issues appear differently in the core city or even the first ring and in the peripheral areas (mainly the communes situated in the second ring). Therefore, in terms of the core city, even if there were no complaints about the quality of the roads, the biggest problem mentioned on this matter is the lack of parking spaces and traffic congestion. On the other hand, most of the decision makers from the peripheral areas have pointed out that there is still a high proportion of unpaved road network in their communes and highlighted the necessity for developing and extending the public transport which could enable the mobility of their residents. Some of the interviewees from the peripheral areas referred to their daily struggle with finding separate public transport companies that in some cases do not respect their agreed schedule, which leaves the inhabitants only with the option of travelling by their own car, which in many cases does not exist. This is a challenge also supported by the study of Leibert (2013, 107), who found that "inhabitants of rural areas are often left to their own devices and have to counterbalance the downscaling of the infrastructure with more private mobility."

Nevertheless, there was a common agreement on the fact that in the last few years great steps have been taken towards improving the public transport within the metropolitan area, as it now also covers the first ring, yet the implementation of plans to extend its coverage in the second ring is still delayed and causes frustration within the peripheral areas. As one of the interviewees stated: "This metropolitan mobility plan has been twisted in so many ways that in the end only the first ring benefits from it and we are still left to wait for it . . . left in the hands of other transport providers." This is a dysfunction that has been highlighted by several academics in the literature review when mentioning the reduced connectivity, poor transport facilities in the peripheries and the centralized transport system (Blowers and Leroy 1994; Lang 2012; Bernt and Colini 2013).

A second issue mentioned by most of the interviewees from the second ring and one representative from the first ring was the development of the sewage network. Thirdly, seven interviewees (mostly representatives of the academic sphere, some decision makers and two planners) believed that the third impor-

tant issue is that the metropolitan area does not function as an entity. The issue was ascribed to the considerable differences between the profile and problems of the core city and its surrounding rural communities. Therefore, "the planning is deficient so you cannot do anything integrated and everyone clearly follows their own interest without understanding the fact that administrative boundaries are no longer relevant." Another interviewee believes that "there is no common strategic perspective . . . of the 18 localities, some have a larger interest area and others a lesser one, but there is no clear overlap between these interests." Or, according to a decision maker, "everything we do is to see immediate interests articulated, we do not take in consideration any studies, therefore our localities develop in a chaotic manner." As Hamilton (2014) has pointed out, in order to strengthen social cohesion and deliver sustainable metropolitan development, local authorities, decision makers need to look beyond their not only administrative but also political boundaries, structure or plan their interests and, according to Carr and Affolderbach (2014), to connect their initiatives to a complex and multi-scalar system.

This problem was also alluded to by several interviewees through the common agreement that especially communities situated in the second ring and a few in the first ring suffer from a lack of investments. This is also an issue that has more facets. Some interviewees pointed out that it is due to the fact that in several areas there is lack of entrepreneurial spirit, many felt that it is because of the ageing population, and others ascribed it to the degraded quality of agricultural land such as the orchards, or the lack of a plot of land for setting up industrial parks. Some planners however ascribed this matter to the defective metropolitan governance, stating that the metropolitan area exists "only on paper, and several times Cluj—but also other similar towns—took advantage of the fact that they met the criteria to receive their own funding clearly on the basis of being a metropolitan area . . . and 95% or even 98% of the investments were made in the core area," or, in another planner's perspective, "because without a vision, investments are not rewarding." Therefore, as Kübler (2005) argues, there is a need for a governance practice which is able to bring together and support various stakeholders in order to develop such public policy regulations and come up with decisions that serve and benefit the entire metropolitan area.

Next to the main issues mentioned above there were several other concerns mentioned mostly once by some of the interviewees from the peripheral areas, such as: lack of other public facilities like water, gas, electricity, garbage disposal, lack of funds or education. Even though all of these concerns are equally important, we would like to draw a parallel with different outcomes by mentioning two examples that resulted from our research and are connected to education, brought up by one representative from the first ring and one from the second. In

the view of the decision maker from the first ring, "in terms of education there is a disadvantage that we are near Cluj. Although we have assigned and equipped spaces for educational activities and we have teaching personnel, many children of our locality go to Cluj to study." Hence, the proximity and better transport connection to the city core might present disadvantages as well. On the other hand, the decision maker from the second ring stated that "we invested in rehabilitating the school . . . and we are thinking of a project through which we could cooperate with the University and offer scholarships for good students, which gives them an appropriate income in exchange for a contract through which they pledge to work in education in rural areas such as ours, for example." When asked if accommodation would be provided as well, the answer was that it is planned to be offered, only the system needs to be worked out well. In brief, the idea behind the initiative is to attract well-educated young teachers who are willing to spend a period of time in a rural area and contribute to the development of a good quality education right on site. As a consequence, the aim of elaborating on these two examples was to reflect on the fact that there are cases when proximity to the core might present a disadvantage, a challenge. Furthermore, contrary to this, remoteness might be an opportunity or *competitive disadvantage* (Taylor and Birrell 2003) for a peripheral area to re-invent itself, to adapt and use its own resources, to develop a long-term perspective. The initiative can be viewed as a place-based approach with a spatial twist (Atkinson, 2000), which helps addressing issues originating from urban exclusion, such as centralized transport connectivity or centralized educational facilities as well as job creation in peripheral areas.

Development Visions, Plans and Strategies of the Metropolitan Area of Cluj

THE RESULTS of the interviews show that in terms of the existence of a viable development vision for the CMA, the answers were almost fairly divided. However, less than half of the interviewees believe in the existence of a viable vision, of viable plans and strategies. Many felt that changes will be felt only over a longer period of time. On the other hand, two of the interviewees from peripheral local authorities based their belief in a viable vision on the fact that there are several ongoing developments and, even if these are not necessarily felt in their areas, they are confident that sooner or later these developments will enrich their communes as well. An example given by one of the interviewees from the second ring is: "I am optimistic . . . even if at the moment it is mostly beneficial for the urban core . . . but, you see, public transport

is going to be extended to [a locality in the second ring] and the water network is going to be extended to [another locality from the second ring], therefore even if it is not me it is my colleague, it is his privilege that he is geographically or strategically better situated." In contrast, another interviewee from the second ring was not as optimistic, feeling that "we are like the seventh wheel of the wagon . . . the core city does whatever it wants with us," as their vote does not have a high value or impact in the decision-making process.

Nevertheless, this also highlights the fact that geographical position, especially when defining a metropolitan area, might not be the most appropriate approach to its delimitation. In support of this statement, Lang (2012) considers the categorization of space based on structural distances "problematic," as the approach does not provide a platform for transparent discussions or considers specific measurable indicators when indicating precise areas—in our case communes—and furthermore, the accessibility of certain utilities is often not related to geographical distance but to other factors.

One of the interviewees has seen the viability of the vision for the metropolitan area in the fact that the strategies have been developed based on studies through which the real problems of the metropolitan area were identified. However, there was a contradiction in the statement, as one of the problems mentioned by the interviewee was exactly the lack of a viable vision.

With the aim of supporting the existence of viable vision and in relation to plans and strategies, three of the interviewees mentioned the existence of the Integrated Urban Development Plan and the Integrated Mobility Plan "as first strategies which have been developed with the involvement of most of the local authorities of the metropolitan area" or, in the case of the Mobility Plan, "at least those who are significant from the point of view of the plan" (according to one of the planners). Others felt that "a viable vision is in a permanent change," and one planner stated that "this vision must be understood and assumed from the inside . . . decision makers . . . will have to assume a willingness for long-term cooperation and planning and to accept the fact that four years of mandate are not enough to finalize their plans, but they will leave a 'legacy' that will have to be coordinated and promoted by the metropolitan area as an independent body."

Conversely, more than half of the interviewees stated that they did not believe in the existence of a viable vision. The representatives of the academic sphere but also planners agreed on the fact that until the metropolitan area exists in the consciousness of the local authorities, of the political leaders, or while there is no institutional structure, there is no viable vision. Others have felt that each local authority follows its own interest, there is no coordinated decision-making process, and their plans and strategies are not harmonized.

An example given by one of the planners was: "One local authority can have a territory designated for residential purposes within its administrative limit, and adjacent to it the neighboring local authority can have agricultural land . . . therefore it is difficult to plan and implement especially infrastructure projects in this manner." As Van den Berg and Braun (1999) state, the process of urban policy should also promote integration. It is necessary to recognize that urban processes do not only involve social, economic and environmental criteria, but they are also reliant on the interrelationship between these, and therefore the harmonization of the different spatial strategies is necessary.

In summary, only three interviewees were not sure about their answers, but it is important to point out that most of the decision makers, regardless of their geographical position, were not exactly sure that there is a viable vision for the metropolitan area in general.

When asked about their own personal vision, most of the interviewees felt more confident in formulating one for their own area and not for the metropolitan region as a whole.

The Balance between Competition and Coalition Building

THE NEXT section of the interviews referred to the existence of partnerships and possible cooperation between the local authorities. The aim of this set of questions was to find out the interviewees perception about the level of cooperation or competition within the metropolitan area.

The answers to this question were almost fairly divided. Half of the interviewees felt stronger towards the existence of competition. Several interviewees thought that there is a competition because "that's what the market forces impose," or because "competition leads to progress." Most of the interviewees felt that there is a competition especially within the local authorities situated in the first or inner ring of the metropolitan area.

The most common reason mentioned was the competition for attracting investments or for being included in certain major development projects initiated by the core city, for example, related to road infrastructure, public transport or public utilities. This leads however to the point raised by Boudreau et al. (2006): if development capacities only concentrate on the urban core or the first ring, territorial disparities will intensify and will leave peripheral areas lagging behind.

On the other hand, most of the decision makers working in the outer ring or periphery of the metropolitan area had a strong feeling that cooperation is dominant, especially within their communities. However, this cooperation has been seen from two angles. Some interviewees recognized the advantage and

benefits of cooperation between the local authorities, such as the exchange of experience. On the other hand, there were also a few interviewees who said that they must work together with other authorities, as their rural areas suffer from outmigration and do not have enough inhabitants to be able to attract European funds or initiate major projects: "We rely on each other." One planner believed that "many actors only cooperate on the surface, but truly they compete for the next moment when they can take on the leadership." Nevertheless, according to Ansell and Gash (2007), leadership is considered to be essential in delivering negotiation and assistance, in building trust, facilitating communication or even encouraging weaker stakeholders to get involved and, just as importantly, to balance power relationships, but this leadership must be collectively agreed.

Another planner felt that "Cluj has the problem of looking at its surrounding territories as a third-rate territory instead of looking at it as a partner." One interviewee felt that Cluj municipality is the dominant player and "the metropolitan area was founded only to serve the municipality." Therefore, this might lead to what Phares (2009) was reflecting on: some of the local authorities might decide not to cooperate, which, in the long run, will result in ineffective initiatives to solve metropolitan problems.

Two decision makers working for the County Council and the Regional Development Agency mentioned that market forces imply competition, but there are essential efforts made for associations or partnerships development within companies but also universities and local authorities, as "at least six clusters have been founded so far" and "companies are aware of their own interest; thanks to their economic interest they get to a consensus much earlier and easier." This shows that the coalition of interests is better recognized at the level of businesses and the creation of clusters serves as a good example for cooperation and interconnections between interests. Nevertheless, because most of these actors are located in the municipality or the first ring, these initiatives might not get connected to a multi-scalar system, as Carr and Affolderbach (2014) suggest, and this would prevent them from having an effect on a larger scale in the peripheral areas as well.

Institutionalization and Networking

THE NEXT set of questions referred to the development of effective metropolitan institutions, as the main purpose was to analyze which approach is considered to be more effective regarding the coordination and development at metropolitan level: developing institutions or concentrating on more effective networking. When asked if there is a need for an institution or orga-

nization which would be responsible for the management of the metropolitan area, most of the interviewees agreed that there is a need for such an organization, but not necessarily an institution. Many of the surveyed actors believe that it is necessary to have an entity which has its own legislature and power to make decisions regarding the planning and development of the metropolitan area. As Hamilton (2014) suggests, when regional institutions are missing even with the existence of cooperative and collaborative actions the successful promotion of long-term policy goals might be questioned.

Several interviewees pointed out that this entity should be apolitical and employ professionals with various backgrounds. One of the planners imagined this entity as "a company with a board of directors having as members the mayors of each local authority, but with an apolitical CEO and management team . . . a very competent technical team for the implementation process."

Nevertheless, we must consider that the emphasis placed on horizontal forms of coordination also demands mutual benefits, trust and collective decision-making amid relevant stakeholders (Bortel and Mullins 2009). Yet, during the interviews it has been pointed out that because a large part of the investment remains in the municipality and the first ring of the metropolitan area, the trust of the peripheral communities is lower. Therefore, as one of the interviewees points out, "we cannot talk about getting to an agreement, to negotiate," as it happened that several decision makers refused to take part at the meetings.

The reasoning of those interviewees who were not in favor of creating a separate organization was that such an action would deepen the level of bureaucracy and "would increase our problems" and "it would require additional financial support." This shows that several interviewees feel that there is a need for more coordination and for formal arrangements with the capacity for operational effectiveness. The answers provided to this question differ in a way from the evidence from the literature, as in many cases we can see that collaborative governance is a more effective alternative to institutionalization. It is also important to point out that from an organizational perspective, when asked who plays a greater role in the development process of the metropolitan area, most of the interviewees made a reference to the County Council of Cluj.

Conclusions

THE MAIN results of the study bring evidence for the peripheralization of rural areas situated in the second ring of the metropolitan area. This is materialized through the lack of resources, capacity and interaction. In addition, the inexistence of a strong institutional base for the coordination and

governance of the metropolitan area has created, in fact, major problems. Most of the interviewees agree that there is a lack of political leadership with regard to the integrated metropolitan approach and, even though there have been examples of interest coalitions between certain players, the partnership and cooperation chapter of this process is slow and ineffective at the moment.

On the other hand, we found that peripheralization has a positive perception among some local actors, the peripheral areas being viewed as places with valuable assets which in the long run may provide compensation for their development efforts. Nonetheless, the lack of consensus regarding the development process, the organizational structure and the fragmentation of the metropolitan area in creating effective partnerships at metropolitan level has led to limitations and disagreement. The division of power between certain actors and the strong socio-spatial differentiation between the metropolitan rings trigger disputes and uneven development. Although most of the actors believe that there is a need for communicative and participatory planning, a common vision and a strong metropolitan institution to focus on the common needs are still necessary.

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Abstract

Towards a Balanced Metropolitan Governance: Combating the "Back-door" Status of Peripheral Rural Areas

With the emergence of the larger urban areas the cities become spatially and functionally reliant on their surrounding rural areas. In order to achieve their long-term development goals and territorial cohesion, metropolitan areas strongly rely on their capacity to practice integrated governance. Therefore, the question the paper addresses is to what extent does integrative governance eliminate the peripheralization of the rural actors of the metropolitan area? The efficiency of an integrated governance approach is analyzed through the case of Cluj Metropolitan Area. The investigation is based on interviews with decision makers, territorial planners and academics from the urban core and its surrounding rural authorities. The results show that in order to act in an integrative manner and avoid peripheralization of the surrounding areas there is a need for a common metropolitan vision, partnership development and an institutional framework on a metropolitan scale.

Keywords
metropolitan governance, peripheralization, Cluj Metropolitan Area, integrated governance