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Cross-border governance: decision-making in the context of EU regional polarization

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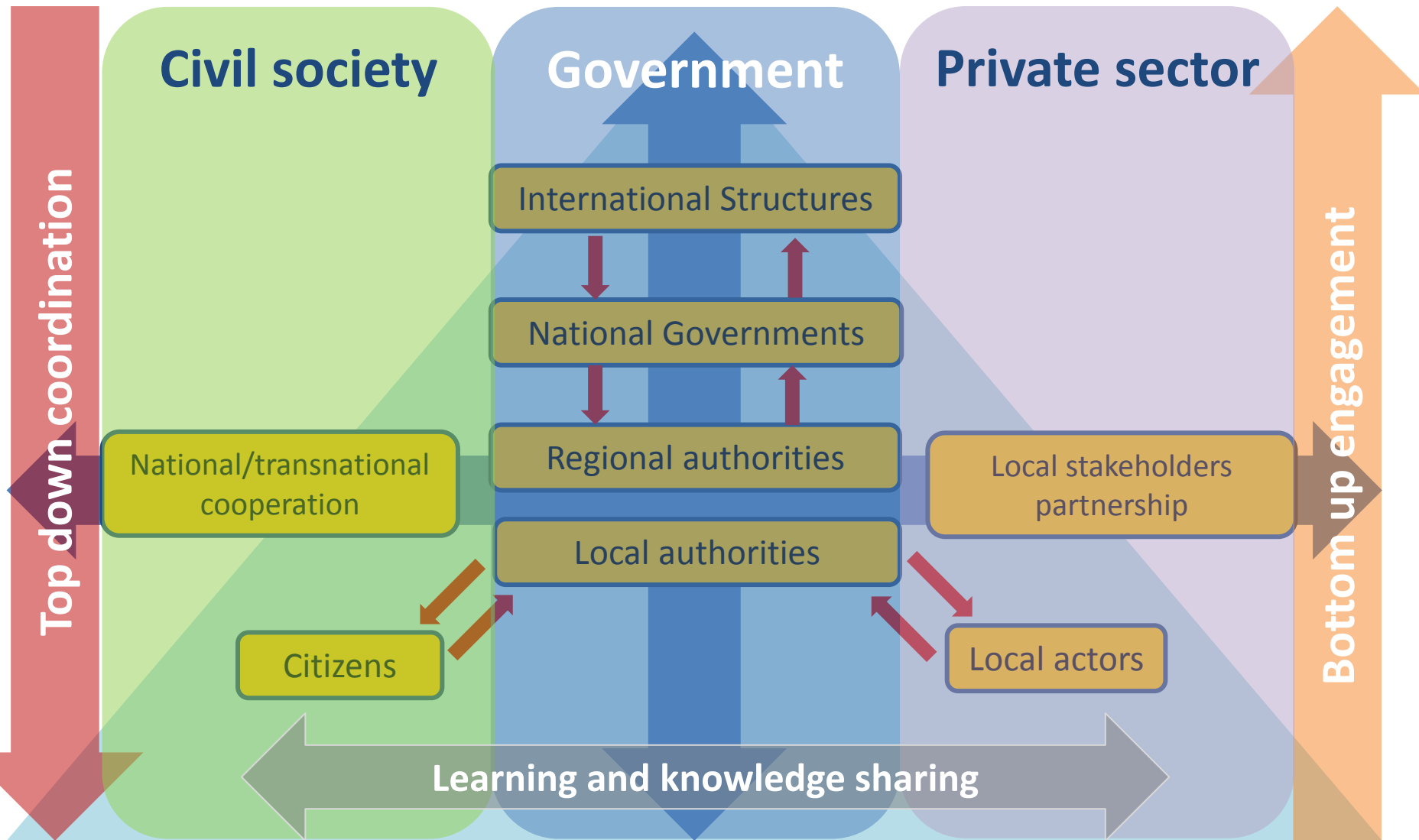


EU Cohesion Policy and Regional Polarization

- Increasing complexity and uncertainty in decision making = increasing pressure to regional competitiveness
- Processes of globalization
- New governmental structures in new member states in relation to implementation of EU Cohesion Policy
- National convergence X regional polarization in CEE countries
- Increasing differences between core metropolitan regions and peripheries

- Focus on governance: there is lack of evidence how particular regions deal with the issue and how are decision taken in relation to regional development

Multilevel Governance



Source: Own design based on EnergyCities (2013)

Research objectives and questions

- To understand decision-making processes in model cross-border regions in relation to regional development
- Assessment of potential of cross-border peripheral regions for co-evolution of institutional innovations
- To identify and conceptualize promising innovative governance patterns to promote such co-evolution in model regions.

Research questions:

- What elements of multilevel governance are present in cross-border peripheral regions in relation to the regional development policies?
 - To what extent are the cross-border decision making processes top-down or bottom-up driven?
 - Who are the key players involved in decision-making?
 - What are the main obstacles for cooperation?
- How can co-evolution of institutional innovations under the EU multilevel governance contribute to regional development and regional competitiveness in the model regions?

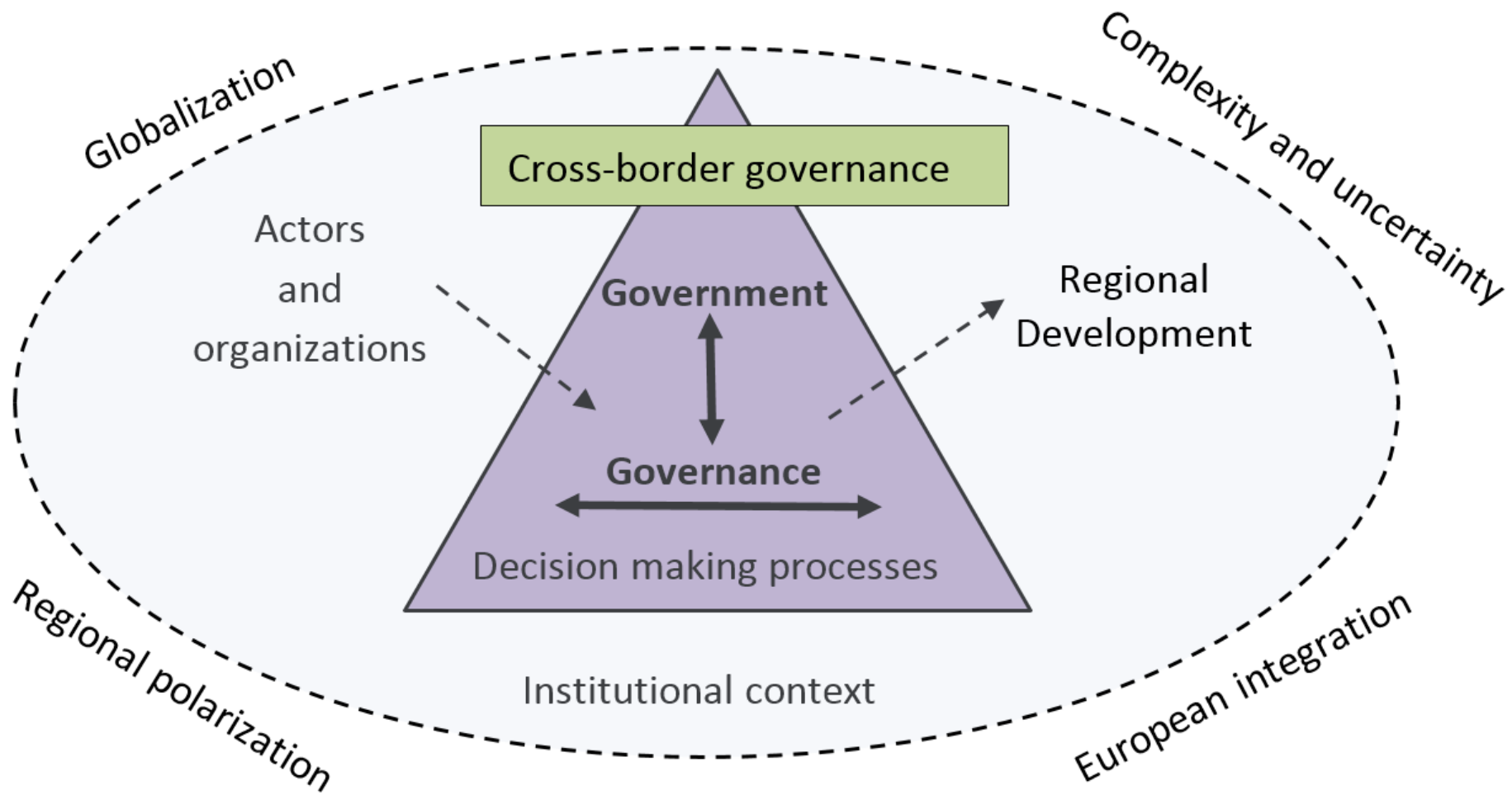
EU Multilevel governance and New Institutionalism

- Different opinions of the effects on MLG
- Is seen as a fundamental tool for a balanced spatial development of the European Union (*First Action Programme, 2007*)
 - based on many optimistic preconditions: suitable institutional settings, willing of politicians or their experience, sufficient capacities, decentralization of the state, collaborative culture, ... (*Dabrowski, Bachtler, Bafoil, 2014*)
- more common in western EU countries but its enforcing is problematic within the new EU member states
- In practise EU Cohesion policy under multilevel governance results in different outcomes due to differentiated national institutional arrangements
- => the necessity to take into account existing informal institutions to be successful in an integration of formal rules for economic development
 - Actors and organizations X institutions
 - Formal X informal and fast moving X slow moving (*Roland, 2008*)

Cross border governance

- Principle of Subsidiarity of EU regional policy and increased importance of cross-border relations.
- Different perceptions of borders
 - Economic opportunities as well as threats
 - Different at different governmental levels
 - Cross-border cooperation or competition?
- Increase in transaction costs of cross-border interactions
- Usually there is no formal authority or jurisdiction over the cross-border territory (*Faludi, 2012*)
- Network organisation of cross-border regions X hierarchical governance arrangements (at national and regional levels)

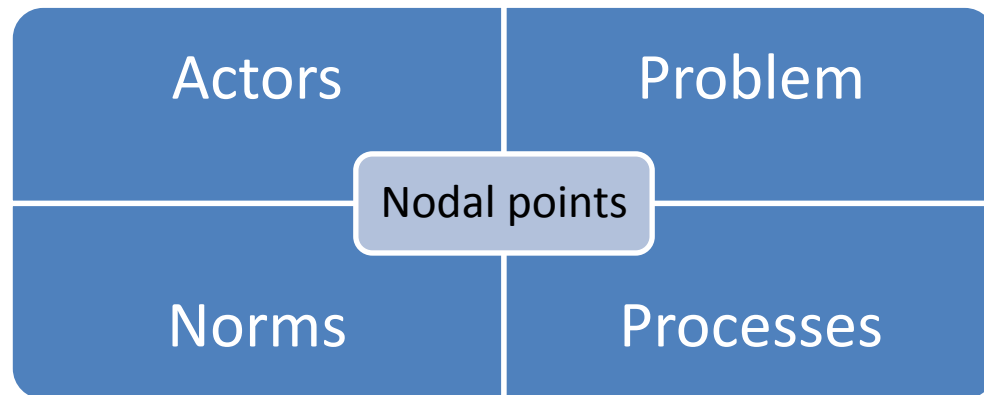
Theoretical and conceptual approach



Source: Own design

Governance as an analytical framework

- “the processes of interaction and decision-making among the actors involved in a collective problem that lead to the creation, reinforcement, or reproduction of social norms and institutions” (Hufty, 2011)
- Includes all actors and processes, formal and informal norms and practices
- In combination with institutional and stakeholder mapping



Comparative case study approach

Ústí nad Labem – Dresden Region
(Czech Republic – East Germany)



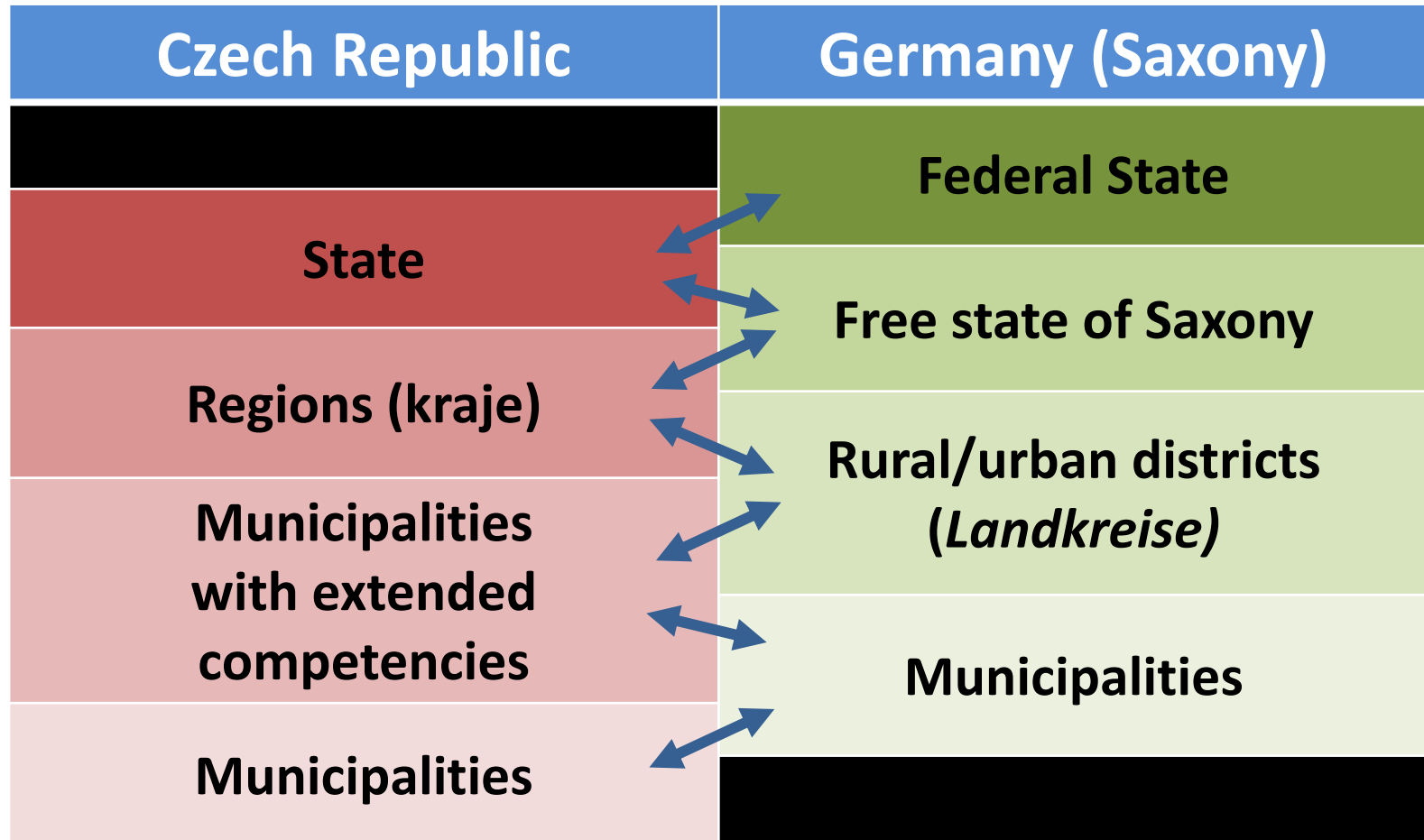
Bratislava – Wien – Brno region
(Slovakia – Austria – Czech Republic)



Preliminary results - Main Barriers of CBC

- 20 interviews in Usti nad Labem-Dresden region
- 16 interviews in the Bratislava-Wien-Brno region
- Obstacles for cross-border cooperation:
 - **Language**
 - **Legislation**
 - **Multilevel mismatch**
 - **No common strategy**
 - **Sustainability**
 - History
 - Political will
 - Different interests
 - No political agenda
 - Insufficient sources
 - Different administrative cultures
 - Size of territory
 - Number of actors

Multilevel mismatch



Multilevel mismatch

(R02): „If you take for example city as a partner, firstly there is completely different territorial impact and political impact and secondly it solves completely different agenda than regions....there is diametrical difference in the competencies of particular institutions.“

(R06): „The Usti region has not any natural partner. There are different competencies at the municipal level, in Saxony they are merged.“

(R32): „You do not really know to whom to speak because it might be different governance systems, different competencies and might not to be equal partners.“

(R01): „Saxony feels like a state at the level of the Czech Republic, the region has city for the partner who does not have regional influence.“

(R20): „There is huge difference between ours and theirs competencies. We are collapsing and they are thinking that if they are federal state that it is the same...but it is not the same.“

Centralisation vs. Decentralisation

(R31) "In Slovakia there is not a problem in people, but rather it is about the set up of system of centralized management, where they have to often wait for decision of somebody sitting higher. It is not flexible."

(R20): „...our decentralization and everything, our competencies, it is desperate, we are somewhere in the half. So, there is huge disharmony.“

(R28): „In Slovakia and the Czech Republic it is more centralized way of thinking and way of planning.“

(R29): „It was always the problem that in Central European countries competencies are so strongly centralised, always asking the ministry, no autonomy at city level at least.“

Problems with outcomes

- Continuity of the cross-border cooperation
 - fluctuation of administrative staff
 - sustainability of projects
- Projects with no real impact on regional development

(R33): „...you come to meeting and make a deal with someone about something and then you go to the other meeting and the person is not working there anymore. It means that this huge fluctuation not necessary sink but rather negatively influence the cooperation and they have greater continuity and if they have any target thus they follow it for long term.“