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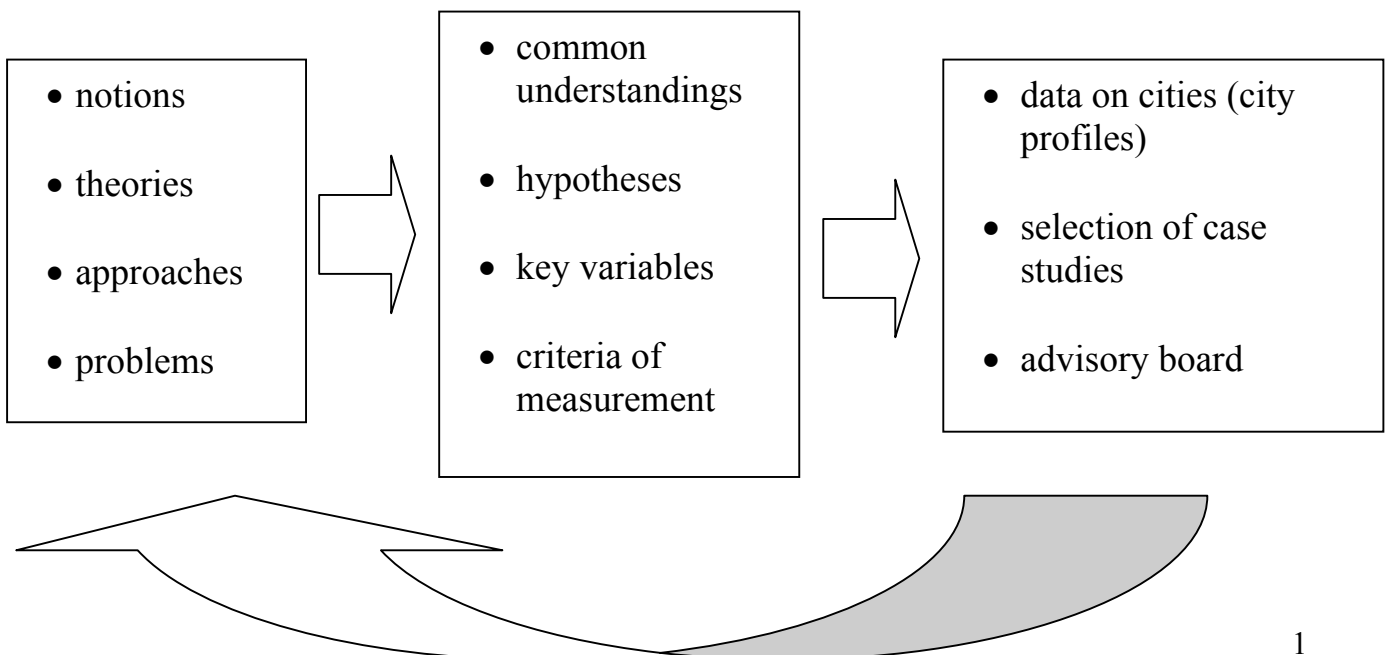
**Darmstadt University of Technology (TUD)
Interim Report on Research Concept**

Background

Work Package (WP) 2 deals with the development of a conceptual framework, providing a theoretical context for the central research questions, guiding the empirical research and delivering perspectives for comparative conclusions.

TUD is leading partner with the University of the West of England, the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, the University of Twente, and Gothenburg University as further partners officially involved. There is a close co-operation with WP 3 (criteria for measurement) because of the close interrelation between the questions discussed in the two WPs. Fortunately, all partners have shown a vital interest in and an enduring willingness to contribute to the work of WP 2 and 3, which has resulted in a vivid interactive progress. Furthermore, conceptual questions have been discussed with the city representatives at the two meetings of the advisory board, and also the practitioner conference in Heidelberg in Oct 2002 has been of value for the evaluation of our conceptual efforts. The consultative process

figure 1: consultations within workpackage 2



refinement

is described in figure 1.

Progress so Far

This interactive progress has so far proceeded in three phases:

1. A first round of discussion was initiated at the first project meeting in Gothenburg (steering committee) at the beginning of February 2002. It was agreed that that TUD as the leading partner would develop a common conceptual framework with input from other partner institutions. Taking the reflections in the bid on the possible complementarity of urban leadership and community involvement as a vantage point, TUD presented a paper “Reflections on the conceptual framework” and a list of “Key research questions” which served as the basis for the next project meeting in Athens in March 2002.

(1) Reflections on the conceptual framework and list of key research questions

General research questions:

What is made possible by CULCI?

What makes CULCI possible?

The paper tried to highlight the significance of CULCI for the future perspectives of cities:

- How are leadership and community involvement related to new forms of urban governance which can be understood as a reaction to changing policy challenges?

It also reflected upon adequate approaches of empirical research, in order to test the plausibility of the TUD’s theses on a possible complementarity of leadership and community involvement:

- What approaches will be used to analyse the policy processes in the case study cities, especially their policies of economic regeneration and social inclusion?

Among other things, the paper:

- suggested a specific notion of “**urban leadership**” and of **institutional performance**,
- reflected upon the often debated shift “**from government to governance**”,
- and showed the connection of PLUS with different theories and approaches within urban research.

The reflections unfolded in the paper were presented to the members of the Advisory Board, in order to get critical comments from the cities’ representatives in the project. Indeed, it is essential for the overall success of the project to link conceptual considerations with the insights provided by the city profiles. This helps clarify what is exactly meant by the two policy fields, **economic competitiveness** and **social inclusion** and what “**cases**” are (“**major policy initiatives**” which are related to the overall policies of the cities).

2. PLUS partners then commented on this first TUD paper, focusing on the questions of **social inclusion, urban leadership, participation, the relationship of government and governance and institutional as well as network analysis**. On the basis of these comments, TUD drafted a second paper (“Reflections on the conceptual framework II”) in June.

(2) Reflections on the conceptual framework II

The paper:

- Identified the aspects which had been agreed upon by all partners,
- Made proposals for those aspects where differences of opinion prevailed,
- Synthesised and develop further various ideas that had been proposed by the partners’ papers, especially the proposals to develop a more subtle notion of **institutional performance** along the different stages of policy making and the use of a **common institutional approach** following Elinor Ostrom.

By June, consensus among partners on the basic lines of a conceptual framework had grown. Furthermore, the coordination of WPs 2 and 3 prove to work, leading to the first PLUS publication. This book will consist of an introductory chapter by TUD and contributions by different project partners on all aspects of conceptual relevance for the project.

3. The third phase began after the June meeting. Meanwhile, TUD has sent a draft version of the introductory chapter to all academic partners in the midst of September, including guidance for the contributions of the other partners, in order to ensure the coherence of the volume. All contributions will be discussed at the academic workshop in Darmstadt in October, including comments by external experts.

(3) Introductory Chapter of Democratic Choices for Cities: Participation, Leadership and Urban Sustainability

The introductory paper can also be regarded as the core of the overall conceptual framework of the project.

It addresses the following:

- CULCI is seen in the context of changing policy challenges for cities resulting in a mix of traditional forms of government and new forms of governance.
- Specific cultural context (notions of democracy) is linked with the question of what “**good governance**” and “**democratic legitimacy**” can mean within a comparative perspective.
- Notions of **urban leadership** and **citizen involvement** are situated within this model of legitimacy.
- A comparative understanding of **institutional performance** is provided.
- The characteristics of **economic competitiveness** and **social inclusion** are systematically linked with these notions.

In addition to the book a shorter description of the project’s conceptual framework will be delivered by TUD which summarises all the contributions in a coherent way and focuses on

the impacts of the various contributions to the empirical research. In order to achieve comparable results, a set of operational rules will be identified as the result of WP 2 and 3, which are to be applied by all partners within their empirical case studies.