

Abstract

This PhD thesis deals with a concept of urban development which is at present in a pilot phase in Germany, the Local Property Owner Partnership (LoPOP). These are characterized by a voluntary collective development of the quarter at the initiative of the property owners. The demographic, economic and social structures lead to spatially differentiated changes which induce complex problems in urban development. Among others, this may result in a notable increase of vacant flats, an increasing demand for low-barrier flats or in investment backlogs of the public infrastructure. A large part of the up-coming investment tasks concerns private property and requires action by private property owners, e.g. in the development of living space. Attempts to activate proprietors via urban development funding have shown minor success up to now.

Current urban development policy formulates the idea to reach a positive development of structurally weak quarters by a more intensified participation of private actors in collective approaches. In view of the missing of empirical data on voluntary action by private proprietors in the urban development, the PhD thesis investigates which factors determine the establishment of Local Property Owner Partnerships and characterize their institutional structure. Due to the small number of existing LoPOPs in Germany as well as to the limited number of scientific publications dealing with this subject, a comparative case study design was chosen. Fifty-six partially structured interviews were held in three heterogeneously distinctive LoPOPs in Dortmund, Essen and Görlitz. The transcribed interview data were processed by means of reconstructive content analyses and the results were formulated as hypotheses.

The results of the thesis show that the subject of examination, LoPOPs, can be discussed with respect to actor-related and institutional theories as well as governance approaches. LoPOPs are defined as a dependent variable with respect to the individual interests and strategies of action of the property owners concerning their real estate management as well as to the governance requirements of state actors concerning the development of the quarter. Thereby, it has become apparent that one should make a distinction between the strategies of action of the state and the private actors. Both groups show three basic types of action strategies which have

introduction

**research
question and design**

**results:
cooperation is only
one strategy oppor-
tunity among others**

constructional and social as well as structural impacts on the quarter. The individual strategies of action of the proprietors are invest, wait and exit. With regard to the quarter, the municipal actors have the strategies develop, wait or retract at their disposal. Moreover, the data analyses discovered a path dependency between the individual management strategies of the proprietors and their action in the collective situation. The actors who are focusing on wait or on exit play the role of free riders. With regard to the proprietors who are willing to invest, three collective strategies of action may be noted: wait, individual effort and cooperation.

central motive for choosing collective action is the reduction of uncertainty

As a central motive for choosing the collective strategy of action cooperation and, thus for commitment to participating in the LoPOP, the reduction of uncertainty could be identified. According to this, the preparedness for cooperation depends on the intensity of uncertainty in the management of the property and, thus, also on the degree of being affected by the above mentioned structural change. Whether the LoPOP is a suitable tool for the elimination of this uncertainty is closely connected with its institutional structure. LoPOPs are - taking into account the specific constellation of actors - characterized by high transaction costs, due to the low legal and social possibilities for sanctions. Therefore, a clear value of the projects and the common standards of the actors are all the more necessary for success.

LoPOPs produce public goods and are an Urban Governance approach, which are based on horizontal coordination between state and private actors

LoPOPs deal with the development of quarters and produce, as a private initiative, also public goods. This establishes the public interest in their development. The results of the thesis show that, due to the constellation of actors, interests and themes in voluntary LoPOPs, the state actors concentrate on the interaction form of the horizontal coordination. Therefore, LoPOPs can be referred to as a form of Urban Governance. Moreover, it becomes obvious that, when the mission statement of a voluntary, informal and private network of small proprietors shall be realised, on the one hand free riders cannot be avoided, on the other hand the public authorities are indispensable providing consulting and financial support. In comparison with traditional approaches of urban development funding, LoPOPs, as collective development approaches, need an intensive involvement of local actors in addition to the thematic debate during their preparation.

The thesis terminates with conclusions for practice as well as needs for further research drawn from the generated hypotheses. The needs for further research refer inter alia to the evaluation of effects of the LoPOPs; the analysis of learning processes among the groups of actors in the development process and in the verification of the generated hypotheses in this work.