

A Contribution to a Sustainable Development of Rural Areas by Implementation of New Planning Instruments and Local Government Reorganisation



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Agenda



- Motivation
- Germany's state structure
- Local government reorganisation
- Example: Odenwaldkreis
- Conclusion

Motivation



- Public debt due to
 - high social and personal costs
 - the investment-related measures and the resulting interest
 - decreasing tax revenue

- Demographic change
 - Shrinking population and remaining duty to perform tasks
 - Increasing costs per capita

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Rural areas



- Rural areas are affected by the demographic change in particular
 - Declining growth
 - Aging population and
 - Smaller cohort of youths

- Less available jobs
- Decrease in services offered by schools, stores and cultural opportunities accompany the decline in population

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Land “consumption“



- Land “consumption” for settlement and traffic in spite of the decreasing population
 - High costs for settlement expansion and maintaining the existing infrastructure
 - Vacancy of buildings
- Find new ways to affect the settlement

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Understanding of the state

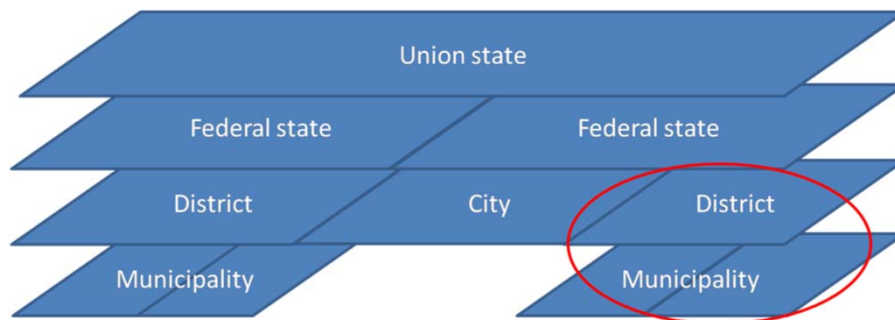


- The public tasks, their financing and organization are changing: fewer citizens face higher costs for social benefits and maintenance of infrastructure
 - Understanding of state
 - Ensuring state, formerly welfare state
 - Plenty tasks of general interest
- Particular tasks of the municipalities
- Possibility to reduce costs due to administration

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Structure of the German state

▪ Different levels of the Federal State



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Structure of the German state

▪ Each level of the State

- Parliament
- Administration supporting the politicians

Parliament

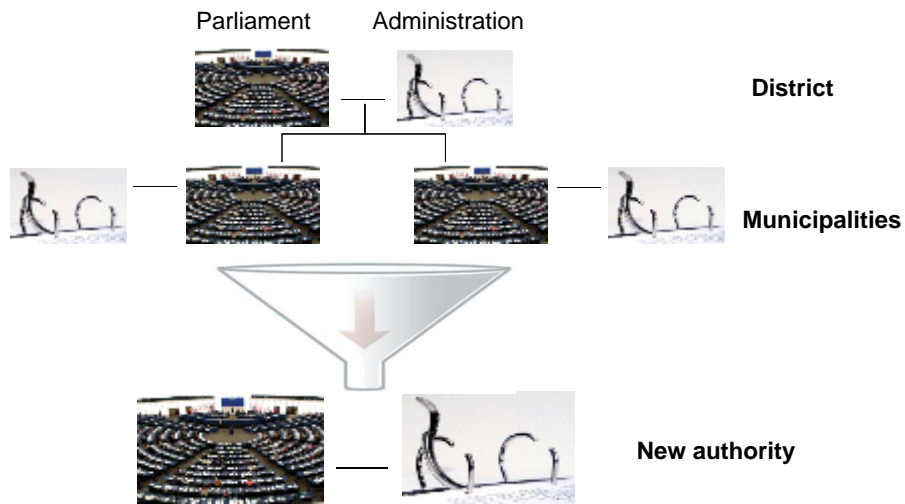
Administration



▪ Aim: Reduction of staff

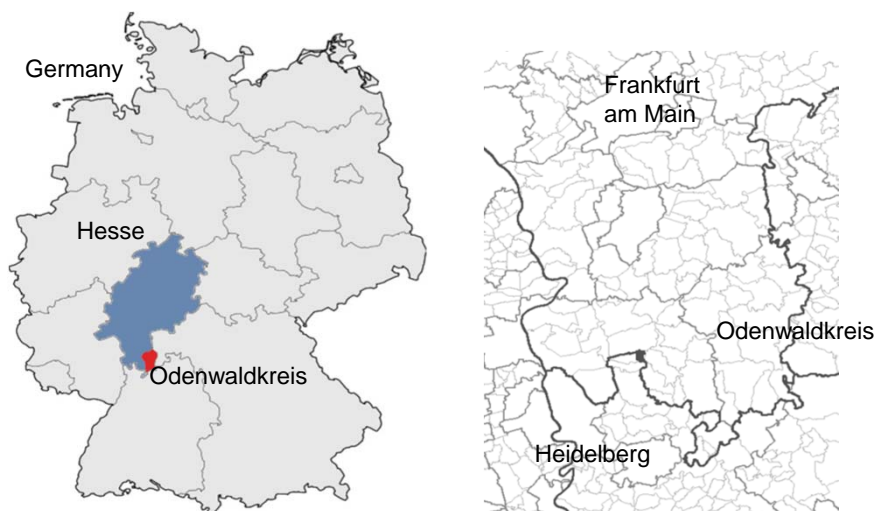
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Changing the structure



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Example: Odenwaldkreis



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Savings: Politics



- Currently: 15 councilors, two heads of the district authority
- Salaries together: about 96,000 € per month

- One single authority would have to pay two councilors with at all about 16,000 € per month
→ about 88,000 € savings per month possible

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Savings: Politics



- Currently: 315 members of parliaments, the costs average about 12,500 € per head and year
→ In total 3.9 Mio. € per year

- The new authority: 45 representative with about 560,000 € per year
→ About 3.3 Mio. € savings per year possible

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Staff Savings



- Employees today: 1,110
- No modified or additional tasks of the new authority
- A town with a comparable tasks and number of citizens (Darmstadt) has 695 employees

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Development of settlement



- External development (at the outskirts of town) and occurrences of brownfields inside the town
 - Settlement is neither compact nor attractive
 - Expenditure for new infrastructure increases enormously
- However: New zoning of residential areas could eventually have more advantages than preservation

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Counterbalance of new buildings



- New housing estates might be offset against existing land-use areas with a high vacancy rate.
- The counterbalance has to include the evaluation of
 - the quality of the existing streets or areas with a high vacancy rate (market value)
 - the expected costs for maintenance, repair and operations of the buildings and the infrastructure
 - the values of the ensembles or single buildings for identification in terms of landmarks for example.
- Likely effects by the new building area have to be pointed out and assessed

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Advantages of one single authority



- More reasonable development: regional development
- Flexibility in measures: split of function
- Flexibility in time: Opportunity to implement measures if and where they have to be performed
 - Clearing as counterbalance for any impact at a later date

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Conclusion



- **Benefits: Savings and implementation of new instruments including**
 - a development and planning on behalf of the whole region
 - an authority able to compensate the local differences in function, demographic change etc.
 - avoidance of redundancies (plans, work etc.)
 - efficiency due to specialisation of the staff.

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Conclusion



- Alternatives have to be considered (principle of proportionality)
- Experiences gained by former territorial reforms shows furthermore the need of collaboration to solve conflicts
- Services which have to be offered at every borough of the new authority could be performed by a “mobile administration”
- Way forward: The balancing has to be standardised

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Thank You!

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