THE CHANGING SPATIALITY OF PORT GOVERNANCE: THE CASE OF ANTWERP

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abstract

It is often stated that governments face problems since the subject of governance (the economy) does no longer coincide with the territory of governance. While economic processes follow the rationale of spaces of flows, territories can be considered as spaces of places. As a consequence, many policies aim to get control over the economy by adopting strategies that focus on networks. This can be observed in European ports where port authorities establish networks with actors in other places outside their territory, even in other countries or continents. The rationale for a more network-oriented governance approach can also be found in the port (governance) literature which increasingly see ports as elements in supply chains/value chains instead of as special kinds of places. Furthermore, the scale of ports increased due to expansions in other jurisdictions and the bargaining position of port authorities has been challenged by vertical and horizontal integration of private companies. Using the case of the port of Antwerp (Belgium), we discuss the networking and rescaling of port governance. The two main rescaling options are the establishment of regional port authorities that govern several ports, and linking port governance to metropolitan governance. Besides these two options we also discuss some elements present in the literature that focuses on the governance of corridors. Following trends and facts have been relevant for the changing spatiality of port governance, (1) the paradigm shift from ports as places to ports as nodes in networks, both in the literature and in policy making, (2) general evolutions in (local) government practices and concepts like shifting parts of local government to unelected agencies and the increased emphasis on regional competitiveness, flexibility and efficiency, (3) the internationalisation of cargo-handling companies, (4) the existence of differences in port governance practices in Europe with municipal port authorities in the so-called Hanseatic region, privatised ports in the UK, and national governments as main level in Mediterranean ports, (5) the role of central governments in Hanseatic ports, and (6) the expansion of ports and the increased spatial separation between port and city. To assess some advantages and disadvantages of the metropolitan and regional port models we discuss, besides economic performance, also quality of life and democratic representation as sources of legitimacy for port authorities. The importance of liveability became apparent in the debates over the effects of port expansion projects in the course of which the involvement of nearby communities was advocated. Finally, although we name the evolution towards a new port model 'rescaling', we will consider whether these and similar processes can be interpreted in terms of territorialisation, place-making and networking.

Key words: ports, port governance, legitimacy, sociospatial relations, Antwerp

1. INTRODUCTION

In an idealised scheme, '*national society, national politics and the national economy coincide precisely in a particular, specific space – the state's sovereign territory*' (Taylor, 2002, p.237). However, the reality has moved away from the '*national economy myth*'. Due to globalisation processes the subject of governance (the economy) does no longer coincide with the territory of governance (if it ever did). It is argued that economic processes follow the rationale of spaces of flows while territories can be considered as spaces of places. According to Taylor (2002; 2004), this leads to a situation in which representative democracy is under threat since the boundaries of the territory have become more porous and governments are no longer able to control the *national* economy. His these is based on a model which combines on the one hand, an Andersonian imagined community (nation), and on the other, a community of fate in politics and economics. The system functions well as long as the people (the nation) have sufficient control over the economy.

A related strand of literature focuses on rescaling processes (Brenner, 2001; Herod, 2011) like the shifting of power to other levels of governance, for instance from the national state to supranational organisations (e.g. the European Union), or from local authorities to metropolitan government structures (Brenner, 2003). Politics of scale is a concept with multiple facets, but one important dimension is the aim of actors to get more control over the subject of governance which increased in complexity and/or expanded. What *spaces of flows* and *scale* studies have in common is their aim to understand large-scale transformations of sociospatial organisation. This encompasses the effects of the crisis of North Atlantic Fordism, globalisation, and state restructuring (Jessop et al., 2008). Within this context we will focus on port governance for three reasons. First, policy makers in Flanders (Belgium) and elsewhere regularly argue that the organisational structure of port authorities should be changed e.g. through the creation of regional port authorities that govern several ports. A study on the spatiality of port governance might contribute to this debate. Second, ports are '*turntables in extensive logistics networks*' (Rodrigue and Notteboom, 2010b) and since logistics and international shipping have played a major role in globalisation processes (Dicken, 2007) it is interesting from a conceptual point of view to analyse how these '[f]*rontline soldiers of globalization*' (Ducruet and Lee, 2006) are governed. Third, although Pallis et al. (2010) identified *port governance* as one of the subfields in port studies that attracted most research attention, the study of Woo et al. (2011) revealed a severe bias in seaport studies towards a positivistic (functionalist) paradigm. As a result, a theme like legitimacy is largely ignored in studies on port governance. Therefore, we here

discuss the legitimacy and spatiality of port authorities and we apply this to the port of Antwerp (Belgium).

The paper is organised as follows. We start with an overview of the main relevant topics in port studies (Section 2). Subsequently we introduce the case by means of an overview of the history of the port of Antwerp (Section 3). With this, we focus on government-related facts. Next, we discuss the three main problems/challenges of port governance and argue that these form the three main sources of legitimacy for port-related institutions (Section 4). These are: (i) representation of people in port authorities, (ii) quality of life and environmental protection in and around ports, and (iii) control over the supply chain and the economy. In Section 5, we discuss how the creation of *super* port authorities and port governance at the metropolitan level cope with these challenges. Finally, we end with a conclusion.

2. RELEVANT TOPICS IN PORT STUDIES

Given the positivist nature of most port studies (Woo et al., 2011) the review of the literature in this section covers the issues which are considered important by both researchers and policy makers. Moreover, several authors of scientific papers are (or were) directly or indirectly involved in the management of ports (e.g. Suykens, Haralambides). We discuss six themes which attracted research attention and are relevant for our study. First, many authors discuss the role of port authorities in light of the paradigm shift from ports as special places/areas to ports as elements in supply chains/value chains (Suykens and Van de Voorde, 1998; Robinson, 2002). This new paradigm of '*ports as elements in value-driven chain systems*' stresses that you can only understand a port if you take into account its place and function in the supply chain, i.e. a port is a node in a network that connects different production and/or consumer locations in different regions. To what extent a port can add value to this (global value) chain determines its position and functioning. The relevance for governance is clear. In the past, emphasis was mainly put on the management of the special places that ports are, i.e. it are areas which are clearly different from other places like cities and agricultural zones. As a result, the management of these areas has been devolved to special bodies, the port authorities. In contrast, the chain paradigm understands ports as nodes in a chain; accordingly, the main challenge is the management of a chain, not the governance of a special type of area. Olivier and Slack (2006, p.1415) describe this tendency as follows: '*In previous approaches, internal coherence has tended to be assigned to the seaport and it has been represented as a homogeneous space.*

Governance approaches began to question the spatiality of the port through better understanding of the port community' (which is embedded in global networks).

Second, port governance is subject to general evolutions in government practices and concepts like shifting parts of local government to unelected agencies (Goodwin and Painter, 1996), and a strong emphasis on flexibility, efficiency and competitiveness (growth of port throughput as source of legitimacy). Indeed, the shift from government to governance, and the promotion of territorial competitiveness in Western Europe (Brenner, 2003) influences the way in which actors look at ports. Ports are seen as strategic elements in the competition between regions and countries, and competition between ports itself is seen as a positive thing as long as there is a level playing field (fair competition) with e.g. a clear implementation of state aid rules (see e.g. Haralambides et al., 2001; for an early discussion of this topic see Bird, 1967). With this, one should notice that port competition not only encompasses competition between regions, but also between companies within the same and other ports (Van de Voorde and Winkelmans, 2002). A particular form of competition is the struggle between ports located in the same region (or country) for public means to invest in port infrastructure. Note that ports also compete for funding with other sectors.

Third, the market structure and the nature of competition between private companies active in ports is relevant when discussing (public) port governance. In the past, the handling of goods at port terminals was mainly done by local stevedoring companies. However, during the last decade, large and often aggressive expansion strategies of terminal operating companies lead to mergers and acquisitions in the sector. As a result, the majority of (especially container) terminals is operated by international groups like PSA, DPWorld and HPH. This spectacular evolution with horizontal as well as vertical integration of cargo-handling companies was a shock for many port authorities and received considerable research attention (Heaver et al., 2000; 2001; Jacobs and Hall, 2007; Olivier and Slack, 2006; Slack and Frémont, 2005).

Fourth, there exist different port governance traditions. In Europe, Suykens and Van de Voorde (1998, p.255) note that '*the Anglo-Saxon tradition of independent port authorities must be distinguished from both the centralizing Latin tradition, as exists in France, Spain and Italy, and the municipal 'Hanseatic' tradition that prevails in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium*'. A quantitative analysis based on a survey of the European Sea Ports Organisation ESPO confirms the existence of the aforementioned traditions (Verhoeven and Vanoutrive, 2011).

These differences are one of the main reasons why the development of a European policy on ports is likely to fail (Verhoeven, 2009). Furthermore, the emergence of two non-European port institutions, PSA and DPWorld, was heavily debated. PSA, which is a part of the Singapore government apparatus, obtained a dominant position in the cargo-handling market in a short period of time and operates terminals in different continents. Similarly, Dubai Ports World expanded its activities over the entire globe (Jacobs and Hall, 2007; Jacobs et al., 2010).

Fifth, even in the Hanseatic tradition of local (municipal) port authorities, central governments have played a crucial role. Besides establishing among others environmental, traffic and building regulations, central governments fund significant parts of new port infrastructure and the maintenance of existing infrastructure. A recent example is the financial input of the Dutch government in the Rotterdam Port Authority to finance a major expansion project, the Second Maasvlakte.

Sixth, the scale of ports increased. Until the second world war, port activities took place in or in close proximity of cities. With the building of larger docks and the development of huge industrial clusters in port areas, ports became separated from cities. Nowadays, in large ports like Rotterdam and Antwerp major terminals are located at distances of 20 or 30 km from the city centre. Following quote of Jacobs et al. (2010, p.97) summarises the reasons for this separation of ports and cities: '*Ports have become increasingly disconnected from cities. Spatially, the increased intensity of port-industrial activity, in combination with urban growth, lack of available land for further expansion, and environmental constraints have led to the move of port facilities away from city centres*'. This growth of ports brings along governance challenges. Indeed, '*port structures have spatially outgrown their host cities and stretch over multiple jurisdictions and require a much higher level of regional coordination*' (Olivier and Slack, 2006, p.1415).

3. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE PORT OF ANTWERP

By means of an overview of the history of the port of Antwerp we here introduce the case and indicate why the port is governed the way it is. The different jurisdictions are depicted in Figure 1. Antwerp is located 100km inland in the Scheldt estuary. Until the 19th century, port activities took place alongside the river edges and small canals that were surrounded by quays with warehouses. In the early 19th century, the French (Napoleon Bonaparte) heavily invested in the port of Antwerp for military reasons (attacking England) with the building of two docks north

of the city. Nowadays, these docks take a central position in the waterfront development. King Willem II of the Netherlands (of which Belgium was a part in the period 1815-1830) transferred these docks, together with the quays alongside the river, to the city of Antwerp. With the rise of (colonial) trade, the industrialisation of Belgium and the German Ruhr area, and the widespread use of steamships, the port expanded and in the 1850s-1870s new docks were build. Expansion continued after the crisis of 1873, and in 1914 the port consisted of a complex of docks north of the city, a modernized quay wall alongside the river bank and facilities for petroleum trade south of the city.
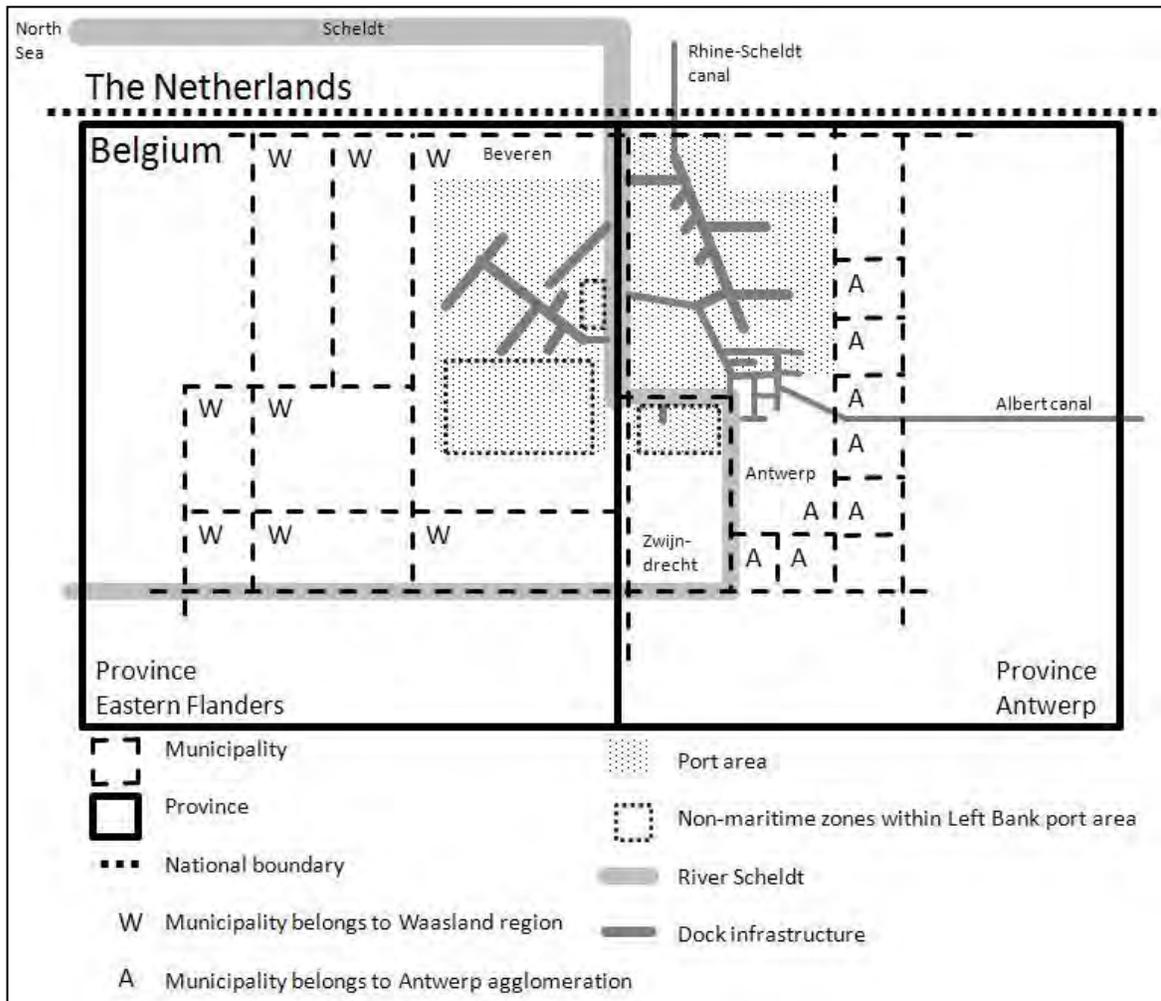

Figure 1: Map depicting the different jurisdictions in and around the port of Antwerp

Between the two world wars, new docks appeared further north together with specialised facilities for different commodities (ore, fruit, kali, automotive industry), and a new canal was built connecting the port with the river Maas (the Albert Canal). Furthermore, railway infrastructure expanded with the establishment of a railway hub. After the second World War,

the territory of the city of Antwerp expanded with the annexation of municipalities located north of the city. New petrochemical industries were established around the Marshalldock, named after the Marshallplan which provided support to build it. Other chemical installations were built at the left bank of the river on the territory of another municipality, Zwijndrecht. Furthermore, a 1956 law laid the basis for a major expansion of the port on the Antwerp-side (right bank) of the river, the so-called '*ten year plan*'. The Belgian government provided most of the budget needed for the building of these new port infrastructures, while the city of Antwerp invested a smaller amount. In the 1970s, the central government funded and managed a major expansion project of the port, this time in the municipality Beveren, located in another province, Eastern Flanders. The expansion of the port on the left bank of the river Scheldt, outside the territory of the city of Antwerp, has resulted in resistance from the Waasland region. The Waasland is located west of Antwerp and contains also municipalities located at a distance of 25km from the port. The important role the central government has played on the left bank is thus both an example of centralised Fordist-Keynesian government policy, as well as a way to avoid the annexation of territory by the city of Antwerp. Until halfway the 1990s, additional port infrastructure was built in line with the plans made in the 1960-1970s and formalised in official land use plans in 1978-1979. The pacification of the struggle between the city of Antwerp and the Waasland over the management of the port came in 1978 with the so-called Chabert law. This law distinguishes between a maritime zone of the port on the left bank, managed by the Antwerp port authority and an industrial part, managed by a newly created Scheldt Left Bank Corporation (°1982). This corporation is a kind of intermunicipal company with as shareholders the region of Flanders, the intermunicipal company of the Waasland, the Antwerp port authority and the municipalities Beveren and Zwijndrecht. Via this construct, municipalities in the Waasland (financially) benefit from the location of the industrial port cluster in their region.

In the 1990s, plans for new tidal terminals on the left bank not foreseen in the land use plans of the 1970s gave rise to new conflicts. Local action groups started a legal struggle which caused a delay, but after some adaptations of the plans, with among others extensive nature restoration projects, new dock infrastructure was built. The development of a *strategic spatial plan* was one of the constraints for the building of a new dock, the Deurganckdock. In the same period, the Antwerp Port Authority became less dependent on the city of Antwerp as it was transformed into an independent, municipally-owned company in 1997. Two years later, the Flemish region established a new port decree which confirmed the role of local, rather independent landlord port authorities. Furthermore, the decree attempted to create a level playing field by developing

a new system for financing port infrastructure in the four Flemish seaports (Antwerp, Ghent, Zeebrugge and Ostend). With this, financial support from the regional government decreased.

The development of a strategic (spatial) plan is part of a broader trend that promotes strategic planning as a more dynamic and action-oriented alternative for the traditional static (rational-comprehensive) land-use planning and emphasises the importance of planning as a dynamic process (Albrechts et al., 2003; Brenner, 2003). The Ghent Canal (Port) Area was the first harbour for which a voluntary strategic planning process started in 1993 (Voets and De Rynck, 2004). In 1997, the Spatial Structure Plan of Flanders (Ministerie Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 1998) selected the four Flemish ports (Antwerp, Ghent, Ostend and Zeebrugge) as engines for economic development. For these *gates* and their surroundings a spatial vision needed to be developed. As mentioned earlier, the establishment of a strategic plan for the Waasland Port, i.e. the part of the port of Antwerp on the left bank of the Scheldt, was also stipulated as a condition for the building of the Deurganckdock. The Flemish government delegated the co-ordination of the planning process for the port of Antwerp to the governors of the provinces Antwerp and Eastern Flanders. The future designation of the port area was discussed with several public and non-governmental stakeholders (one document mentions no less than 36 different actors; Provincie Antwerpen et al., 2005). However, most strategic decisions are taken by the Flemish government (e.g. land use plans). It was initially planned that a strategic planning process would produce a spatial implementation plan (SIP, land-use plan) in few years time. Some new land use plans (SIPs) for parts of the Antwerp harbour were approved by the Flemish government but there is not yet an approved land use plan that delimits the port area. The strategic planning process thus became less temporary. Furthermore, committees and institutions were established for e.g. the follow up of the nature compensation scheme for the Deurganckdock project and nature development in general. Note that so far no use has been made of the possibility in the Flemish port decree to establish a sub-regional consultative body (subregionaal overlegorgaan, SRO) to advise the Flemish government in spatial and environmental issues (in Ghent an SRO was created in 2002-2003).

Planning has predominantly taken place in the public sphere, but the private sphere encountered changes too. Traditionally, cargo handling in Antwerp was carried out by locally based companies like Hessenatie and Noord Natie (later HessNoordNatie, HNN). Gradually, foreign players like P&O Ports entered the Antwerp stevedoring market. However, two major events dramatically changed market conditions. PSA (Singapore) acquired a dominant position

in the Antwerp (container) market with the acquisition of HesseNoordNatie in 2002 (Vanelslander, 2008). Furthermore, DPWorld (Jacobs and Hall, 2007) took over P&O Ports (2005-2006). As a consequence, the most strategic terminals are now managed by global players.

In recent years, the port authority develops policies to become more involved in the supply chain, also outside its own territory. For example, the port expressed interest to become a shareholder of Duisport, a major inland port in Germany. Furthermore, hinterland connections are actively promoted and the subsidiary Port of Antwerp International NV (PAI) is set up in 2010 to develop activities in other continents. The goal of PAI is to '*put the Port Authority's maritime foreland policy into practice by participation or acquisition of shares in overseas ports and port projects with a reliable rate of return, located in strategically important regions such as the Middle East, India, Sub-Saharan Africa, Vietnam and Brazil*' (Antwerp Port Authority, 2011). In contrast with traditional economic participation strategies which try to support and embed strategic and promising *national* companies (Oosterlynck, 2005), the PAI strategy is more related to economic policies that support local companies to invest abroad. Besides many other activities, the Antwerp Port Authority thus aims to get more grip on the supply chain by a foreland and a hinterland strategy.

Summarising, although central governments invested significant amounts of money in the port of Antwerp, port management has mainly been carried out at the local level in line with the Hanseatic tradition. Since the 1960s-1970s port expansion was no longer accompanied with the annexation of territories by the city of Antwerp but took place on the territory of other municipalities (and another province). The port authority is a local public body but the degree of independence has increased, and besides representatives of the Antwerp city council and the federation of port companies, the Waasland region now has two representatives in the board.

4. THE CHALLENGES FOR PORT GOVERNANCE

4.1 The three main problems of port governance

In the introduction we referred to Taylor (2002; 2004) who maintained that stable democratic governance requires a link between, on the one hand, a community and its representatives, and on the other, the subject of governance, e.g. the economy. In other words, politicians must be able to exert influence on the subject of governance (in our case a port). However, the definition of ports has changed over time, from ports as a special type of area to ports as nodes in logistic

networks. This relates to the first problem of port governance, getting control over something which is structured as a network that transcends many jurisdictions and which is global in scope, i.e. the *economy*.

Besides cargo-handling activities, many ports give room to logistics operators and large factories like refineries, petrochemical plants, and blast furnaces which are an important source of employment. The function which is largely absent in ports is living, i.e. while many people work in ports, housing is a rarity in these areas. This leads to the obvious question, for which people should the representatives govern the port, or in the words of Taylor (2002): '*Who are the demos?*'. Hence, the second problem of port governance is thus the absence of citizens within the port perimeter.

A third problem of port governance is the environmental impact of the activities located in ports. The increased concern for the environment is one of the main challenges ports have to address (Estache and Trujillo, 2009). Especially local communities associate ports with congestion and pollution. The negative perception at the local level is also based on the combination of an increasing demand for space with decreasing local employment. Negative externalities like congestion, the use of space and air pollution, are indeed a weakness of ports since they have to compete on the market of space with other types of land use.

As described above, we identified three main challenges for port governance, (i) controlling the port economy, (ii) representing a community, and (iii) improving quality of life in neighbouring areas. Since good governance might be considered as a system which effectively *solves* problems, port governance should give a response to these three challenges. As a consequence, the legitimacy of port authorities might be evaluated in light of these issues.

4.2 Source of legitimacy 1: Democratic representation

The basic source of legitimacy for institutions in democratic societies is the fact that elected officials control these agencies (accountability). In the current situation, members of the Antwerp city council of all political parties are represented in the Board of Directors of the Antwerp Port Authority. However, the functioning of the port is not heavily debated. The main reason for this lack of interest seems to be the dividend paid by the port to the city, i.e. as long as the port pays more than 10 million Euros each year, no questions will be asked. However, both the Waasland region as well as the region of Flanders regularly state that it would be preferable that they

increase their control over the port. This might lead to the conclusion that not all citizens involved are represented equally in the decision-making process. Hence, involving all relevant communities might increase the legitimacy of port governance.

4.3 Source of legitimacy 2: Control over the supply chain and the economy

In the introduction we argued that it is not sufficient to have elected bodies that represent a community, but that these bodies should be able to make a difference. In case of port governance, policy makers should be able to influence decisions of global players in the logistics and shipping industry since individual decisions of firms can lead to inefficiencies in the logistics system as a whole. Decisions might include port choice, mode choice, location decisions, and the use of terminals as storage space.

4.4 Source of legitimacy 3: Quality of life/environmental protection

A key strategy to mitigate the tension between local communities and the regional port economy is the improvement of land-use and environmental governance in order to reduce environmental externalities. This strategy is in the first place understood as a location (decentralisation) policy which locate some port activities further away from cities (Musso, 2009). But a proper environmental management of port areas can also be part of this strategy. An interesting example can be found in the Rotterdam port region (called Rijnmond) where an independent environmental agency exists, DCMR.

DCMR (Dienst Centraal Milieubeheer Rijnmond; central environmental management agency) originate out of discussions on the co-operation structure for the further development of the port of Rotterdam in the 1950s and early 1960s. The result was the establishment of the Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond (OLR, Public Body Rijnmond) in 1964. The competences of this structure were limited to advisory tasks and the establishment of guidance documents. In contrast with these limited competences stands the establishment of an elected council with 81 members. Hendriks and Toonen (1995) distinguish several intergovernmental questions which explain the rise of the Rijnmond authority, among others the environmental effects of port and industrial activities on the surrounding municipalities. In 1978 and 1982 OLR received new competences in the fields of town and country planning and the environment (noise, air quality,…). A 1986 law decided to demolish the OLR but an environmental agency remained, the DCMR. Up till now, the DCMR plays a role in permitting and monitoring, and advises public institutions. As the DCMR case shows, successful environmental and land-use policies might form a source of

legitimacy for port policy. Indeed, port areas seem appropriate territories for land-use and environmental management.

5. DISCUSSION

In this section we discuss two types of port governance. First, some authors state that regional port authorities which govern several ports are the preferable option. For instance, the minister-president of the region of Flanders (Belgium) stated that '*If we were starting from scratch we might come up with a system in which the ports are governed centrally from Flanders*' (Lloyd Special, 2011, p.6). A second option is linking port governance to metropolitan governance. This is in line with Taylor's (2002; 2004) general discussion on the challenges of contemporary governance. Building on Castell's (1996) work which discusses the differences between, and the evolution from, spaces of places to spaces of flows, Taylor argues that the imagined community will be territorially bound, while a community of fate is more closely related to the spaces of flows. As a way to lower the tension between the community of fate and the imagined community, Taylor suggests a more prominent position for cities (city-regions). Indeed, cities are both nodes in (global) urban networks, as well as distinctive communities. This is a consequence of globalisation processes which made that '*states are no longer the prime political communities*' (Taylor, 2002, p.236). Therefore, we discuss the option to link port governance to metropolitan governance. Finally, we make some comments on the governance of corridors and on the rescaling of port governance.

5.1 Regional port authorities

When discussing port governance and the related question of the appropriate level of government, some authors stress the importance of the port region and propose *super* port authorities that manage several ports. The demand for stronger institutions is thereby linked to a shift from port cities to port regions (Estache and Trujillo, 2009). This idea is conceptually linked to a regional (*new regionalism*) governance approach. These approaches point to the increasing competition between European regions for mobile, global capital. In their view, by joining forces and creating a regional port monopoly, *superports* have a stronger position in negotiations with global shipping and terminal operating companies. In other words, the advocates of regional port authorities promote port regions as the prime spatial unit for port governance and seek their main legitimacy in a stronger bargaining position for port authorities in negotiations with stevedores and shipowners (Estache and Trujillo, 2009).

This regionalist approach shows similarities with the classical Fordist-Keynesian model, i.e. regional society, regional politics and the regional economy coincide precisely in a particular, specific space – the territory of the region. An increased control over the economy is the main advantage of this approach. In reality, however, economic regions cross national boundaries and it is seldom possible to define clear, stable boundaries. In practice, we can refer to the multiport gateway regions as defined by Notteboom (2010). In this classification, the Belgian ports (e.g. Antwerp) fall in the same group as Dunkirk (France) and some Dutch ports (Amsterdam, Zeeland Seaports, and Rotterdam). Furthermore, it might result in a pattern of relative prosperous regions which control strong economies and disadvantaged regions with less economic activity.

Regional governments in Belgium are strong players in the political landscape with each an own parliament and government. Representation and accountability does not seem issues. However, residents of Antwerp generally consider the port as *their* port while residents of the region of Flanders feel less connected to the port. Although the Flemish government promotes its four ports as Flanders Port Area (FPA), the *imagined port communities* seem to be situated at the city level.

In Belgium, land use planning and environmental policy are devolved to the regional governments. The Flemish government can thus autonomously take decisions in many fields that impact quality of life (taking into account European legislation). Nevertheless, while the general framework is laid out at the regional level, the government relies on area-based policy making when complex issues have to be solved, like the delimitation of ports and the development of a vision on mobility for the Antwerp agglomeration (e.g. Masterplan Antwerpen). This indicates that the political boundaries of the region does not coincide with metropolitan realities. Therefore, we explore in the next subsection the idea of port governance at the metropolitan level.

5.2 Metropolitan port governance
City-regions and metropolitan areas are seen as a crucial but often missing level in governance. Since ports are commonly linked to the city level, we here discuss the governance of metropolitan regions. In general, large cities contain more than one political unit (municipality), a fact that explains the large amount of studies on metropolitan governance and the like. Since many ports crossed municipal boundaries in their growth, port and metropolitan governance

have things in common, although there are noticeable differences too. According to the metropolitan governance thesis, governmental fragmentation and suburban autonomy lead to income and resource imbalances which make that central cities have higher tax rates, and higher levels of homelessness and poverty, while the suburban population enjoys the benefits of the metropolis without paying for it (Mitchell-Weaver et al., 2000). In other words, there is a mismatch between the *urban demos* and the territory governed by municipal (urban) governments. If a port is governed by the central city, the situation can be the reverse; i.e. inhabitants of the areas that neighbour the port have little influence on decision makers in the central city which govern the port.

Many ports are located in and near large agglomerations. It seems a logical way to establish a governance structure that manages both the urban agglomerations as well as the port. This scale-jump is an evident response to both the suburbanisation process and the expansion of port areas. According to Taylor (2002), a main advantage is the existence of a city *demos*, while cities are at the same time embedded in the spaces of flows. In Antwerp, there seems to exist a rather strong *port community feeling* which is primarily linked to the city of Antwerp. As mentioned in the introduction, port studies investigate the port community and according to De Langen (2004) port authorities should be cluster managers which foster (the creation and preservation) of port communities. Besides the port authority and port-related firms, other institutions like universities can be part of port communities. In general, the port community is part of the metropolitan region and many port managers live in the suburbs of the city itself. However, in the case of Antwerp, it seems odd to include the whole Waasland region in the metropolitan area. Accordingly, the danger of cities as prime political units is that the regions in between are a kind of left-overs. Note that recently a debate on the identity of the Waasland region started (initiated by the public intermunicipal company Interwaas; Ooghe, 2011). The position of the region in between two large agglomerations (Ghent and Antwerp) seems to be one of the main sources of identity.

As in many other agglomerations, attempts to establish in Antwerp a governance structure at the supra-municipal level failed. Nevertheless, a democratically represented body at this level has the potential to streamline ongoing discussions on e.g. mobility and environmental problems in the agglomeration. Note that several European directives point to agglomerations as meaningful units for environmental governance. European air quality standards are not met in the Antwerp region and according to European legislation (2008/50/EC) air quality plans should

be made for such *agglomerations*. Also the European noise Directive (2002/49/EC) requires the establishment of strategic noise maps and action plans for *agglomerations*, which '*shall put a special emphasis on the noise emitted by* […] *industrial activity sites, including ports*' (Annex IV). The development of these plans is understood as a dynamic process with an actualisation at least every five years and has, as a consequence, a permanent character. Metropolitan (port) governance seems a logical way to make environmental policy operational. With this, quality of life in the agglomeration might be an important source of legitimacy.

5.3 Governance of corridors

Apart from the port literature, authors and policy makers discuss the governance of *corridors*. Several definitions of corridors exist, ranging from pure infrastructure corridors to corridors as urban or economic development axes. In most cases, the main issue which they address is the '*coordination between policy domains at different spatial levels*' (Priemus and Zonneveld, 2003, p.167). Indeed, due to their linear character, transport infrastructures/corridors cross areas with different land use types. As a result, many policy domains must be involved (nature, housing, economic development, water,…). Moreover, these linear elements cross different jurisdictions. The policy integration issue is also discussed in EU-documents like the Integrated Maritime Policy (COM(2009)540 final) and the Transport White Paper (COM(2011)144). However, these documents are not informative on the kind of governance structures that must govern the strategic corridors in the Single European Transport Area. Unsurprisingly, discussions on legitimacy are not present in these texts. Note that there exist several international committees and commissions that have some responsibility on transport corridors like the Rhine Commission. However, they act within the framework of international treaties for which national states are still the prime political units.

Although chains and corridors are appealing concepts, the relationship between territories and logistic networks must be taken into account. The traditional concept of the nodal region shows that in case of e.g. retail flows, destinations (stores, consumers) receive commodities via central nodes. This results in a landscape of nodes which serve surrounding regions. Logistic networks might create a system of areal units (markets) connected by flows. This can be seen in contemporary conceptual models of ports in logistic chains (Notteboom and Rodrigue, 2005; Rodrigue and Notteboom, 2009). Indeed, Figure 2 (Rodrigue and Notteboom, 2010a) shows that logistic strategies are often aware of national boundaries. Corridor approaches take only

one part out of the system, the largest nodes and the thick flows between them and tend to ignore the areal dimension.
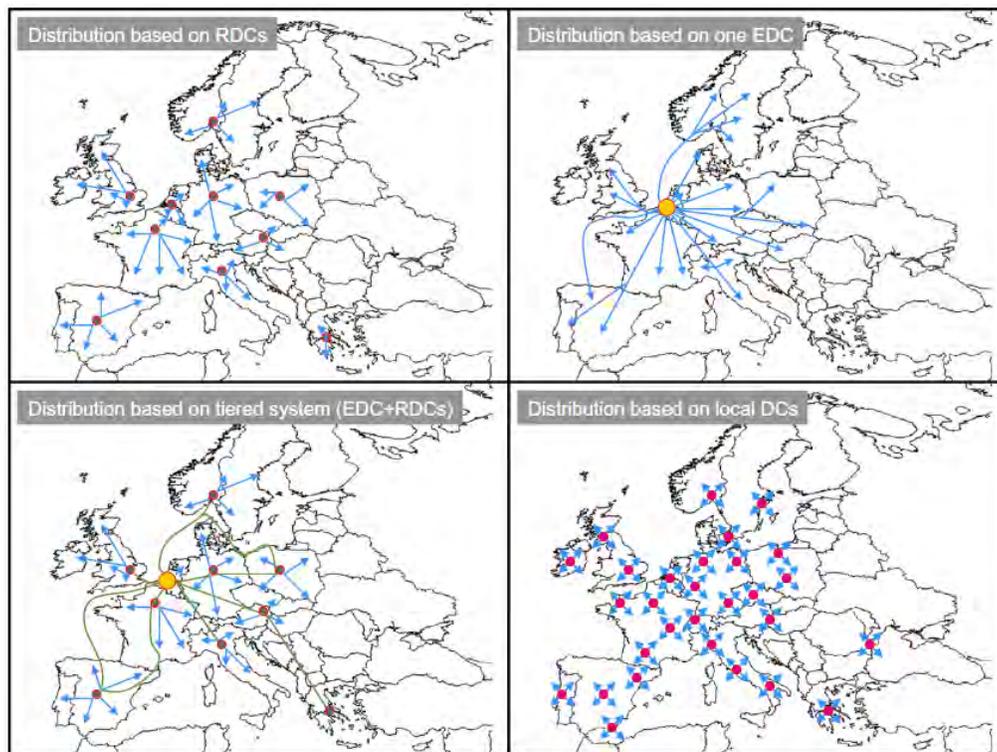

Figure 2: Distribution network configurations for containerized import cargo (retail) in Europe. (RDC = Regional Distribution Center, EDC = European Distribution Center;
(Source: Rodrigue and Notteboom, 2010a, p.504)

5.4 Rescaling port governance

As the literature on the governance of corridors illustrates, the governance of networks is often restricted to enhanced cooperation between existing *traditional* government structures. The foreland and hinterland strategies of port authorities might be understood in this way. Furthermore, the establishment of global communities and networks of social movements does not result in elected bodies that represent all people involved in a given network, despite the merits of these movements (Castells, 1999; Hacker, 2002). The two *realistic* alternatives to local port governance discussed in this paper both encompass a rescaling of the local port governance fix. Even without the devolution of competences from the regional to e.g. the metropolitan level, such a process requires the establishment of a new balance between the levels involved. Even if tasks are redistributed among regional, metropolitan and local governments, all levels can gain since ports might be governed more efficiently and with more legitimacy. The redistribution of power is not a zero-sum game. However, this interpretation in

scalar terms can be based on a viewpoint that privileges scale over other geographical concepts. Therefore, we here touch upon the other main concepts of sociospatial relations, network, place and territory (Jessop et al., 2008). Inspired by scholars which propose to eliminate scale form the geographical vocabulary (Marston et al., 2005) one could argue that the rescaling is in fact a networking process. Further research can try to define the evolution from e.g. local to metropolitan governance as a networking process. It is plausible that for some politicians rescaling simply implies a closer contact with the representatives of other jurisdictions in a new institutionalised compromise. Furthermore, FPA might be interpreted both as an attempt to increase cooperation among local port authorities as well as a strategy of the regional government to increase its power over ports. Cooperation clearly has a network dimension and the many formal and informal contacts and relations port authorities have with other ports and actors cannot be reduced to vertical links in an hierarchical scalar framework. Regarding place, many port authorities and business organisations aim to establish and/or maintain a port community. Together with a strict delimitation of ports in e.g. spatial planning processes this can be understood as a place-making process. The delimitation has also a clear territorial dimension. These first insights tend to confirm that the Territory-Place-Scale-Network heuristic of Jessop et al. (2008) might be a valuable approach to analyse a topic which clearly has several dimensions. Nevertheless, up till now it is hard to imagine new forms of legitimate governance which are totally different from existing (scale-structured) forms of government.

Whether a city(-region) or polycentric system is the appropriate level of governance remains an open question. In the Antwerp case, there exists a precarious balance between the two banks of the river Scheldt. This indicates that there are limitations to the *one city one port* model. The case presented in this paper might inspire discussions on the concepts of *new medievalism* or *polycentric state*s (Herod, 2011).

Finally, a critical remark must be made regarding the assumption that governments should govern something homogeneous, a demos, a specific type of area (e.g. a port). The rationale is that people then feel a sufficient degree of connectedness with the political system which governs them. Moreover, it seems more efficient to manage something homogeneous instead of managing a collection of heterogeneous things. Large cleavages within the subject of governance might lead to conflicts. However, uneven spatial development cannot be ignored and the existence of redistributive systems to erase regional disparities is a major source of legitimacy (besides representatives in a parliament) of e.g. the Keynesian Welfare National

State (KWNS, see e.g. Jessop, 2004) and the European Union (EU, Armstrong and Taylor, 2000). Hence, the role of port governance in processes of uneven spatial development is an interesting topic for further research.

6. CONCLUSION

Port governance studies tend to focus on strategies of ports that increase the degree of control over the supply chain. The underlying paradigm is that of '*ports as elements in value-driven chain systems*' (Robinson, 2002), which replaces the traditional view of ports as special (homogenous) places which need to be managed by dedicated authorities. However, most studies limit legitimacy to the bargaining power of port authorities vis-à-vis shipping and terminal operating companies and thereby ignore other sources of legitimacy.

We detected two other sources of legitimacy for port governance. First, accountability and the representation of people in political institutions increase the legitimacy of port governance. Second, an efficient coordination between policy domains might be an additional source of legitimacy. Since the main conflicts on ports are located on the economy-ecology cleavage, a dedicated land use and environmental policy must complement the economic (transport) strategies of ports. We discussed the spatial planning process in the port of Antwerp and conclude that port governance would benefit from more permanent governance structures for environmental and land use-related issues.

Two potential scale-jumps for port governance were discussed, (1) the creation of regional port authorities which manage several ports, and (2) port governance as part of metropolitan governance. The advantage of cities is that they are nodes in networks as well as areas with a distinct community (Taylor, 2002). However, as the case of Antwerp shows, in between metropolitan (port) regions lay areas which are clearly connected to the port, but which only partly overlap the agglomeration. Note that port governance will always be multilevel in nature. While managing port areas and granting concessions to companies are the main tasks of Hanseatic port authorities, decisions on major investments and subsidies for new infrastructures and maintenance works are competences at the regional/national level. Nevertheless, there are several arguments to keep an important part of port governance at a subregional (metropolitan) level.

Although we focused on one case (Antwerp) which is part of the Hanseatic port governance tradition (which is present in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium) several elements of the discussion might be transferred to other regions. The ecology-economy discussion is present in many ports all over Europe and even in the rest of the world. Most ports have a clear link with a city; as a result, the link between metropolitan governance and port governance can be discussed outside the Hanseatic regions too. Only for transhipment hubs not located in the vicinity of a city, this discussion seems to be less relevant, but only a minority of ports is in this situation.

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