Regulating urban office provision: a study of the ebb and flow of regimes of urbanisation in Amsterdam and Frankfurt am Main, 1945-2000

Ploeger, R.A.

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8 FRANKFURT 1977 – 1989

Culture-based city-marketing and inter-urban competition

8.1 Introduction

The main challenge for the new Wallmann administration elected in 1977 was to overcome not only the crisis in political management that had affected public administration in Frankfurt in the 1970s, but also the concurrent economic stagnation. Since the detailed and scientific planning for the city districts previously introduced by the SPD had encountered so much opposition, the expectation is that the CDU would revert to more schematic planning, planning in which the electorate will have more say. Moreover, structural economic stagnation will call for further economic expansion politics. However, the preceding struggles in the Westend will call for compensation through, for instance, (social) housing projects: a middle way, with integrated plan-development combining economic expansion and social politics. This chapter describes in detail this political project, the discussions this entailed, and the outcomes in both political and spatial economic terms.

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<th>Points of departure</th>
<th>Expected regime of urbanisation</th>
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<td>Market: strengthened D-Mark – decentralised industrialisation – national financial cluster – growing macro-economic problems;</td>
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8.2 The new political landscape

*Internationalisation of capital markets and neo-liberal ideologies*

The world economic crises of 1973 and 1978, aggravated by the collapse in 1973 of the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates that follow the US Dollar, led to significant problems for the national West German politics of *Globalisierung*, which had been advocated from 1966 onwards. As an export country the competitive position of West Germany was relatively good, so that the economic crises of the 1970s did not hit the West German economy as hard as they did elsewhere, but they nevertheless did bring about a decrease of GDP, a rise in inflation, rising unemployment, and additional state debts. In 1982, after important disputes within the SPD-FDP coalition on the future of economic and social policy (compare Berndt, 2003: 288), the coalition broke up and the CDU joined the FDP in a new coalition government. Helmut Kohl became the new political leader of Germany.

This neo-conservative turnaround in German politics led to the abandonment of Keynesian full employment/social redistribution/economic growth politics (Brenner, 1999d), in favour of a supply-side policy with the goal of “improving profitability by means of lowering costs (that is, wages), increasing productivity, reducing business taxes, decreasing social expenditures, diminishing labour protection laws, wage structures and generally making more flexible conditions and hours of work” (Schlupp, 1992, in Brenner, 1999d: 16). These policies, deployed to promote the position of West German capital in the world economy, had neo-liberal tendencies, in that they disseminated a belief in open, competitive, and unregulated markets, but in a more moderate form, combined with neo-conservative fiscal policies and economic and social policy (Brenner, 1997; Brenner, 1999d; Brenner & Theodore, 2002).

The national neo-conservative turnaround in politics that emphasised the marketplace in the social market economy, together with the developments on the international financial markets that increasingly became the drivers of the economy, had important consequences for the city of Frankfurt. Although its development as a financial centre had been fast and relentless during the 1960s and early 1970s, it was mainly a domestic affair. During the 1960s, Frankfurt definitely surpassed Düsseldorf as the leading national financial centre. As a result of the deregulation of national financial markets during the 1980s, the quest for hegemony amongst financial centres had to be fought out on a European level. Frankfurt had a favourable point of departure in this regard. In the second half of the 1970s, the Bretton Woods system collapsed and the member states of the European Union
subsequently constructed their own currency system (the European Monetary System, created in 1979); that made the D-Mark the guiding currency for Europe. Unsurprisingly, the role of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange grew in relation to foreign stock exchanges, and the internationalisation of Frankfurt as a financial centre rose rapidly, with the increasing presence of international banks in the city (Grote, 1998, Schamp, 1999). This new development stage in the formation of the financial district of Frankfurt obviously put enormous pressure on the built environment, and was one of the foundations of the new urban policies during the Wallmann years.

Urban politics: the changing of the tides

The period we refer to as the Wallmann years began in 1977. As soon as the ballot boxes had been opened and checked on March 20, 1977, it was clear that the City Council would soon undergo radical change. As we saw in the previous paragraph, the CDU gained an unprecedented electoral victory, jumping from 38 to 50 seats, while the SPD’s fortunes fell from 48 to 38 seats. Why did this change occur?

Balser (1995: 383) lists the explanations that the parties involved put forward. The immediate first reaction seems somewhat feeble: after 31 years of the SPD in power, the last four years without its post-war coalition partner the CDU, people just wanted a change of leadership. The truth of this statement is undeniable, but the question remains why this change of heart took place exactly at that moment in time, and not 4 years later, as was the case nationally. Balser speaks of SPD ‘arrogance’ after 31 years in charge of the city. This arrogance had grown up after the 1972 elections, when the SPD became the sole responsible party. Their overconfidence backfired during the years in which society had changed, and the SPD found adaptation difficult. Instead, the SPD went on securing their grip on society by claiming pivotal positions in political committees and public companies. Moreover, the image of the SPD was damaged by several incidents, the most conspicuous being the alleged corruption affair involving Mayor Arndt.

A second explanation was given by Ronneberger and Keil (1995: 294), who argue that the political change did not indicate that the CDU had conducted a brilliant campaign, but rather that the SPD had proven to be politically bankrupt. In the preceding four years the SPD had failed to adapt to the new circumstances that were a combination of low economic growth, a more demanding electorate, and the need to pursue urban economic development in an almost completely built-up urban environment. All these changes demanded more complex solutions
for urban development than those to which the SPD had grown accustomed during the previous 31 years.

What issues did the CDU raise? Their campaign focused on safety and crime; criminality levels had increased in the previous 5 years (Balser, 1995: 383). They further emphasised the undeniable problems in the city by speaking of an urban crisis. The CDU used the failed attempts of the SPD in previous years to come to more democratic planning to emphasise the growing ‘ungovernability’ of the city through the current regulatory arrangements (Prigge, 1995), and proposed that a strong and decisive state-led urban management program would bring Frankfurt new prosperity.

Whether out of annoyance with the SPD, or fuelled by a strong belief in the CDU program, the political turnaround came about. The press and the politicians built up the pressure on the SPD Mayor Arndt even on the election night. He was only halfway through his term of office, but it was thought that he should make way for Wallmann, the leader of the winning CDU (Balser, 1995: 379). Two and a half months after the elections Wallmann indeed succeeded Arndt as Mayor. Arndt went into the opposition, as did the rest of the SPD, and the CDU became politically responsible for the well-being of the city of Frankfurt. However, five out of six Cabinet members with whom Wallmann had to work in the City Cabinet were still from the SPD. Most of these SPD senior councillors, moreover, had just recently been elected, and their terms of office had only just begun. Wallmann had learned from the SPD arrogance of recent years, and did not seek to replace these councillors with CDU politicians.

So Wallmann accepted that he had been lumbered with an SPD-dominated political elite, and tried his best to set urban politics on a new course. This was mostly concerned with building a positive image of Frankfurt as an urban centre of international economic and cultural allure.

Old ideas, new wrappings: culture and image

As noted above, Wallmann emphasised the ‘urban crisis’ in the electoral campaign against the SPD. In his quest to deal with this crisis, the new Mayor deployed ‘urbanity’ as the solution (Prigge, 1995). When in power, Wallmann, together with his new SPD dominated Cabinet, had to operationalise this rather abstract concept. To achieve this aim, the words ‘identity’ and ‘culture’ were emphasised, although these concepts remained ambiguous and open to many interpretations, so the translation into real action was therefore a contested undertaking, and the image
politics of later years have by no means been the result of strategically planned consistent policies (Scholz, 1989: 15).

In the 1970s, the idea had grown up that Frankfurt was a city without a real heart, where economic functions were thriving, but ‘urban life’ was fading. In response to this disparity, the Mayor connected economic growth with his interpretation of ‘urbanity’: in 1979 he voiced the wish to develop Frankfurt into a European financial and economic metropolis. To become such a metropolis, he argued, the city’s allure should be raised, and the cultural scene could play an important part in this respect.

To a large extent, nothing much changed in the content of urban policies and urban projects. Wallmann continued the promotion of the real-estate based growth of the financial sector, by permitting banks to build offices in Frankfurt’s built-up area, and by providing the infrastructure for capital circulation, including roads, the Airport, and the Frankfurt Fair. In order to make these politics acceptable to the public at large, Wallmann, backed by cabinet members Hoffmann (Culture) and Haverkampf (Construction), both SPD, introduced the politics of the re-urbanisation of culture: infusing the inner city of Frankfurt with the traditional institutions of high culture that had been destroyed during the war (Alte Oper, Römerberg, Museums to be created at the banks of the River Main). Together, the strategies were captured in the phrase Cultural Metropolis (Prigge, 1995: 56).

Councillors Hoffmann and Haverkampf were central figures in this realignment of urban politics. Even before 1977 Hoffmann was promoting Frankfurt’s cultural allure, and although his work went practically unnoticed, the Frankfurter Neue Presse labelled it a Culture Offensive, from which the city had benefited enormously during the last few years before the recent elections (Balser, 1995: 391). Wallmann recognised the benefits for Frankfurt’s image that could stem from this culture offensive, and gave Hoffmann an almost free hand in continuing and intensifying his work for Frankfurt’s cultural scene. Furthermore, Hoffmann’s work became one of the showpieces of the new ‘conservative-populist’ (Prigge, 1995: 55) politics of the CDU.

According to Prigge’s analysis (1995: 56-59), the new urbanity adopted by Wallmann and the new city government was a ‘stripped-down’ version of the comprehensive ideological social critique on German cities, as voiced by Mitscherlich (1965). In his electoral campaign, Wallmann had adopted this critique on urbanity, and now had to operationalise Mitscherlich’s complicated sociological statements that concentrated on the synergy between the human and urban environments and that can be either uplifting and mutually enforcing, or alienating.
and causing degeneration, or anything in between. Mitscherlich had argued that, ideally, the city provides a space for specific forms of communication and social relations from which a certain urban atmosphere, or shared consciousness derives that provides a community spirit and a sense of individual freedom. In his vision, the synergy between the individual and the urban environment had eroded in the post-war period, because the function of the city as a social platform on which liberty and togetherness could thrive had disappeared in modern urbanisation. His advice to urban politicians was to find ways to restore the opportunities for building social relationships in the urban environment so as to re-establish amongst the inhabitants a sense of freedom and togetherness. From this sociological exposé, Wallmann touched on an important element of urban aesthetics: urban policy should provide architectonically rich urban centres. He proposed a policy of (re)developing the old inner city through the creation of cultural spaces, using historical architecture.

Consequently Wallmann diverted the radical social-psychological and politico-economic anti-establishment critique of the 1970s into image-politics with regards to urban history, culture, aesthetics, and management. Every element was worked out into a number of very visible projects with which the electorate could identify (Scholz, 1989: 73-103):

- **History:** Alte Oper – Römerberg,
- **Culture:** Museum waterfront – Kulturschirm am Römerberg,
- **Aesthetics:** Fair – Skyline;
- **Management:** Public private partnerships – Public efficiency – Public Relations and advertisement of plans.

These new policies had an advantageous start. The Westend tumults cooled off, just as the whole ideology of anti-capitalist and pro-residential planning in Frankfurt had slowly faded away. On the contrary: while previously the offices in the Westend had been seen as a threat to urbanity and as objects sucking the life out of the city of Frankfurt, in the final years of the 1970s the press began to report positively about the high-rise office buildings. The Frankfurter Neue Presse featured an article entitled: ‘Life under the silver towers’ (Das Leben unter Silbertürmen), to reflect the change of image that was taking place in Frankfurt (Balser, 1995: 393). People were inclined to identify more with the city than they had previously done, and so the politics of culture and image had a fruitful base to start from. However, the economy of Frankfurt had suffered some decline, which had its consequences for the office market. In 1977, no less than 520 office objects with a total floor area of
800,000 square metres were vacant. Among them were 16 high-rise towers of at least 10,000 square meters each. This was of course a cynical establishment after years of struggle (Friedemann, 1992: 92), and caused an office development dip in subsequent years.

Because of the slump in the office market in the early 1980s, developers temporarily developed new plans on a smaller scale than in the first half of the 1970s. The pipeline effect caused some turmoil with the enforcement of old plans associated with land purchases and the planned evictions of tenants. In May and June 1980, the last skirmishes at the Westend resulting from evictions took place (Krauß, 1997: 230). Because of the final determination of the Bebauungsplan, the legal status of the zoning ordinances was now clear, and new land purchases could rest on sound legal underpinnings. When the legal status became clear, the piecemeal land purchases were continued, albeit in the first instance on a somewhat smaller scale, and with better alternatives for the existing inhabitants.

Now that ‘building big’ was no longer the natural enemy of Frankfurt citizens, the politics of real-estate-based cultural boosterism and image politics could be employed without further hesitation. In their politics, the CDU used the formula of what Wallmann referred to as ‘Kontinuität und Wandel’ (continuity and change); Wallmann realised that there were not many opportunities for the CDU to change urban politics radically from those that had already been advanced by the SPD in recent years, so he emphasised the details by which the new politics differed from the old (image politics and the advancement of traditional culture in addition to the usual real-estate based economic policies).
Wallmann wins again

For the CDU, who wanted to leave a visible mark on the city of Frankfurt within a short time, the inner city provided a good showcase. Much of this part of the city had remained in ruins while other city districts were redeveloped. In the eyes of many, the gaping holes in the fabric of the historic inner city had been a blemish on the city, and already in 1978 the CDU was energetically developing plans, granting building permits, and making funds available for the establishment of museums and the reconstruction of buildings such as the Karmelitenkirche and the east side of the Römerberg that belonged to Frankfurt's cultural heritage. Most of the development plans adopted by the CDU in their first years, plans in which they invested a great deal of public funds, had already been under preparation for a long time during the SPD period in office. For example: the rebuilding of the Alte Oper was begun soon after the 1977 elections and completed in 1981, just before the next elections; SPD plans to make the historic inner city car free were continued, beginning with the development of the pedestrian area; plans to create a museum waterfront were made more definite by the acquisition of land in order to prevent land speculation; and progress was made in planning procedures for the Film Museum, the Architecture Museum, and the Museum of Modern Art (Balser, 1995: 394).

Wallmann's tactics worked wonders for the electoral success of the CDU. Because the SPD found it difficult to adjust to their role as the main opposition party on the city council, the CDU encountered no rigorous opposition, and the culture-based image politics soon showed the first results in the historic inner city, where a museum cityscape was becoming increasingly evident. These accomplishments were played out during the electoral campaign for the 1981 city council elections, and the opposition could not bring to the fore their worries about the high costs of the politics of culture in a way that made another political turnaround possible. On the contrary: the CDU gained even more seats on the city council (rising from 50 to 53), while the SPD dropped to a historic low of 34 (a drop from 38), and the FDP even failed to pass the 5% threshold and disappeared from the city council until 1997. A new party on the city council was the Green Party: Die Grünen gained 6 seats on the city council, marking the beginning of their long journey to political power. But, in spite of the victory of the environmentalist Green Party, the elections had been a vindication of CDU policies: Wallmann was given a new mandate to continue his conservative, populist, and highly expensive policies of culture, economic promotion, and identity.
8.3 Urban management CDU style: the unfolding of world-city strategies

Now that the CDU had consolidated its power base on the Frankfurt city council, the reorientation of urban politics was pursued with even greater vigour than before. The absolute majority had been consolidated and even expanded, and the SPD and the Green Party were left competing for the same voters, so it was clear that the politics of culture had caught on amongst the electorate, and that the CDU had a mandate to build up these policies.

In the new four-year electoral period, CDU politics were increasingly geared towards making Frankfurt a first-class location for the investment of international capital and in which to settle, creating the grandeur of a world-class city. The electorate had indicated their acceptance and support for the policies of culture promotion through real-estate investments, even though this cultural turnaround was made increasingly instrumental to economic policies. It was believed that the presence of a highly developed cultural scene was indispensable to an international economic metropolis; so the image politics were now deployed to promote the city of Frankfurt internationally, responding to the opening up of financial markets, which posed new challenges for urban financial nodes. To facilitate the move from a national financial centre to an international node, urban land-use planning was made more flexible and instrumental to the notions of (international) capital (Ronneberger & Keil, 1995: 294-295).

The three main components of the economic expansion policies in Frankfurt are the International Fair, the Airport, and the Central City Banking District. Lieser and Keil (1995) refer to them as the “magic triangle” supporting the economic advancement of Frankfurt in the 1980s. Together, the conservative city government, the Fair directorate, the Airport management (Flughafen AG), the Railway company (Bundesbahn), public-private development companies such as Frankfurter Aufbau AG, and some big planning and architectural bureaus such as Speer and Unger (Ronneberger & Keil, 1995: 295) formed a variety of partnership combinations to make plans and guide investments. These were to transform Frankfurt into a competitive world city through the adoption of the visible place politics that started with the refurbishing of the historic inner city and were now being continued in the economic realm. Together, these three ‘world city citadels’ (Friedmann & Wolff, 1982) were responsible for the advancement of Frankfurt as an international financial metropolis.
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The international fair

The first new goal that Mayor Wallmann set after the 1982 elections was the modernisation of the Fair, for which he was the chairperson. Architecturally appealing extensions were planned in order to create an internationally competitive and even leading fair location. For this to become a reality, the relationships between the city council and Frankfurt’s top architectural firms such as Ungers and Speer became closer. In the preceding years, the planning department, led by Haverkampf, had already strengthened the ties with the city’s top architecture and urban planning bureaus during the development of the plans for the museum waterfront. Bureau Speer had developed an urbanised plan for the waterfronts, and commissions for the designs for the separate buildings had been given to world famous international architects such as Richard Meier and Josef Paul Kleihues. Haverkampf spoke proudly of Frankfurt as a city with top-of-the-range modern architecture (Balser, 1995: 410).

The development of Frankfurt into an important exhibition centre was taken up energetically. This planning for the Frankfurt Fair had already progressed noticeably since 1978, when the Messe und Ausstellungs-GmbH asked the Bureau Speer to develop an overall vision for the future of the Fair area. The presence of the Fair was the basis of Frankfurt’s image as a city of trade, but the city had never paid much attention to the fair area itself; it had been subject to expansions based on functional considerations derived from narrow economic motives. What resulted was a fair area that lacked coherence and allure, a situation that the Fair Directorate wanted to change. The plan proposed by Speer in 1981 divided the space into three development areas connected by public streets and an internal person-conveyor belt. The planning of the public grounds between the main buildings was undertaken. In 1982, the ensuing plans were approved by the city council, albeit in a slightly trimmed-down version. The further, more detailed design and specification was passed on to the Unger architectural firm and several private developers.

Airport expansion

A second new main goal for urban politics was the realisation of the Startbahn West extension of the Airport; plans for this had precipitated a major dispute after the administrative Court of Justice in Kassel came up with an unclear solution on the subject in 1979. The extension of the Airport was more a federal and state (Hesse) issue than a local matter, since legally air traffic is a national concern, and Frankfurt’s local residents were barely affected by most of the airport’s expansion.
When in October 1980 all the legal obstacles to the development of the western runway had been overcome, the first activities at the location were met with non-violent resistance, soon followed by a demonstration involving 15,000 participants. One year later the actual start of the building of the runway led to early clashes that escalated into the massive riots of 1980 and 1981 between the authorities and the opponents of unbridled airport expansion.

*The Banking District and the skyline*

As mentioned above, the creation of the European Monetary System (EMS) in 1979 made the stable D-Mark Europe’s pilot currency. Although the Bundesbank was not responsible for the economic stability of other member states, this development transformed the Bundesbank into a European Central Bank *avant la lettre*. Other European currencies were linked to the D-Mark and followed with it the fluctuations against the dollar and the yen (Holtfrerich, 1999: 242). This role of the D-Mark as a key currency brought more foreign exchange business to Frankfurt, which heightened its attractiveness as a financial centre: “By the mid 1980s, 40 of the world’s 50 largest banks had a presence in Frankfurt, and 80% of all foreign banks active on German soil had chosen Frankfurt as their location” (*ibid*). This space-demanding further extension of the financial district of Frankfurt put pressure on the urban management that had to facilitate this growth. In the next section, the planning and management processes that were developed is considered in more detail.

### 8.4 Planning the world city in times of economic decline

The new grand schemes for urban development advocated by the second Wallman city government and its private sector allies required planning choices. Even though planning as a discipline was regarded with some suspicion, now that it had become apparent that all the prognoses on which the old strategic plans had been based were incorrect, in March 1982 the decision was taken to work on a new strategic plan. In its favour a number of recent developments were articulated.

First, the structural changes in the international economy caused a structural decline in traditional industries, which led to many job losses and low-profile intermediate uses of large, old industrial sites in the inner city of Frankfurt. However, the problems of these redundant inner city sites had a positive side effect, because they provided the city with the room to grow and thereby cope with
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Table 8.2. Urban development in Frankfurt – some indicators

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>1970</th>
<th>1987</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inhabitants</td>
<td>669,000</td>
<td>618,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwellings</td>
<td>265,150</td>
<td>310,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>538,500</td>
<td>558,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- tertiary sector (1)</td>
<td>332,100</td>
<td>427,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work related commuters</td>
<td>179,500</td>
<td>258,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Traffic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- passengers</td>
<td>9,401,800</td>
<td>23,303,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- freight</td>
<td>327,300</td>
<td>950,700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Krauff, 1997; (1) Services, trade, banking and insurance, traffic

the increasing demand for space. These industrial spaces had been developed for industry in times when planning was guided by a belief in the separation of urban functions. They were therefore separate, monofunctional islands within the urban fabric. The planning department and the politicians still operated in this manner, even though industry was fading away and open land for new urbanisation was scarce. The source of inner city urban land that the old industrial sites represented had been neglected for a long time. Moreover, planning law was based on city expansion and greenfield development, and in the preceding decades urban planners had adapted their practices to meet these regulations (Speer, 1984: 55). Within a short time span, urban areas such as the Adlerwerke, Mouton, Naxos Union and the East and West Harbours were vacated, and either filled with low-profile intermediate uses, or left vacant. Investors speculating on the possibility of high yields when new development started took up positions on these industrial sites, thereby causing high costs and complicating the restructuring process.

Second, urbanisation in the 1960s and 1970s had created an extended spatial fix that reached the boundaries of the municipality. More important in the eyes of planners was the ‘unbalanced’ development of the city. While the western part had experienced a boom through the heavy pressure exerted by real-estate investors and financial services industries, the eastern part, with its poor accessibility, had remained relatively untouched by the processes of urbanisation. As a result, the eastern part lagged behind in economic, physical, and social respects. The urban planners feared that, without public intervention, the eastern part of the city would fall into an era of further disinvestment, paralleled by increasing investments in the western part, much of which would then become a monotonous office area (Mainzer Landstraße, Westend, Gallusviertel, Messe-University district).

Strategic long-term planning and public intervention to guide the processes of urbanisation, urban investment, and economic concentration were considered
vital. In planners' jargon, 'balancing the west-east gradient of the city' was presented as the main goal of this operation, because politicians were concerned about the positive economic effects of intervention and the negative side-effects of non-intervention.

On the positive side, in spite of the economic backlog, much was expected of economic development planning for the goal of raising Frankfurt up to be a European, even world level, financial economic centre. Moreover, both the planners and the city council finally acknowledged the strategic potential of the vacated or re-used industrial sites in the inner city. They wanted to create an instrument that could guide investments to these and other preferred places, while on the other hand diverting them away from the 'wrong' places.

On the negative side, the necessary reduction in public expenditures, after years of exhausting the city's budget for building the cultural metropolis, made the city more dependent on private investment. If private investors were able to pursue their own needs and priorities, a growing concentration in the already strong western part of the city would ensue, where the large superstructures of the economic landscape would overpower and crowd out the small-scale city fabric. In this way, the market processes would emphasise the spatial separation of urban functions and the contrasts between the eastern and western parts of the city. The slump in office space absorption of the 1977-1980 period led developers to be more cautious in taking new offices into development. Because of the pipeline effect, this decline in new development was only visible from 1982 onwards. The city council, who wanted to develop Frankfurt into a financial metropolis, were encouraged to intervene even more in future urban development.

In the light of all this, the City Council requested Büro Speer, who in the recent past had developed the plan for the Museum Waterfront for the city council, to develop a draft *Leitplan für die Frankfurter Innenstadt* (Strategic Plan for the inner city of Frankfurt). Two main overall goals were stated: one functional, one spatial. All further lines of future development for Frankfurt were derived from these two goals. Functionally, the goal was to boost Frankfurt's position in the network of European and German metropolises, and urban development was to be instrumental in this respect. Spatially, the central goal was to neutralise the functional and substantial quality gap that had grown up between the eastern and western parts of the city. The combined strategy for functional and spatial development concentrated on the upgrading of the eastern part of the city through investments in housing, infrastructure (*U- and S-Bahn* and the ring motorway) and economic spaces, and the identification of economic development areas in the city.
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Figure 8.1, The 1983 City Leitplan

as a whole in order to guide investments. To guide investments spatially, Büro Speer returned to the development axes of the 1968 Fingerplan. These had in the meantime been filled up with offices and their density could not be further increased. The places destined for dense office development were therefore new axes used by Büro Speer as a structuring principle. These main development areas were located on old industrial sites situated alongside infrastructure, adjacent to the inner city: extensions of the axes in the old Fingerplan, the Mainzer Landstraβe and the Theodor Heuss Allee, as well as a new axis in the eastern part of the city, the Hanauer Landstraβe (Speer, 1984: 54). In 1983, the City Leitplan was presented to city council and it was accepted with very few amendments (cf. figure 8.1).

To secure development along the lines set out in this plan, the City Council emphasised the importance of mutual cooperation between the departments involved in urban development, including the planning and economic development departments. Furthermore, public interventions were undertaken to trigger investments in the ‘right’ places: the main examples were interventions on the land market and the development of detailed plans for strategic sites. Two of these planning efforts with the most relevance for office development were those for the Mainzer Landstraβe and the Hanauer Landstraβe. Both are considered further below.
The Mainzer Landstraße was one of the densification axes indicated in the Leitplan. The city street was the western exit road, leading from the inner city to the Airport, running alongside the Westend banking district, the locations of the Fair, the University, and the Railway Station. This spatial situation and the highly developed infrastructure position in the centre of the public and private transit systems made the area very popular with investors. The fact that the Mainzer Landstraße was not only located amidst popular and heavily used functions such as the Fair, the banking district, and the University, but was also paralleled by obsolete industrial sites made the street ready for intensive office development in the eyes of the planning department, who commissioned the Bureau Speer to develop a detailed urban landscape vision for its redevelopment. In the urban landscape vision that was delivered in 1986 after extensive consultations, room was created for 120,000 square metres of office floor space to relieve the pressure on the Westend and to create an impressive skyline for Frankfurt. The Mainzer Landstraße was divided into four realms, each with a different functional, urban, and architectural design, into which new developments could be fitted.

To a certain extent, this vision limited the development freedom for investors. There was no such limitation in the planning for the Hanauer Landstraße that was carried out simultaneously. Situated in the eastern part of Frankfurt, this Hanauer Landstraße was the only 'development axis' that had not already been mentioned in the 1968 Fingerplan. This omission is hardly surprising, since at that time the area was still an extensive harbour-related industrial district. From the late 1960s onwards the industries left the harbour. The vacated spaces were occupied by small-scale trade and service companies, or they remained empty. This change implied an under-utilisation of the area, which fell into an economically downward spiral. In the Leitplan for Frankfurt, the aim was therefore set to bring about a reversal of this downward trend by nominating the Hanauer Landstraße as a development axis as a counterpart of the Mainzer Landstraße in the western part of Frankfurt. Consequently, Bureau Speer was asked to develop a Leitbild Hanauer Landstraße in order to spell out the aims of the Leitplan in specific detail. In September 1984 this plan was presented; it was more cautious in setting boundaries for development than was the plan for the Mainzer Landstraße. This caution is not surprising, since in the eastern part of the city the main concern was to trigger development into the unpopular area. In contrast with the western part, where the development potential was so high it had to be diverted to adjacent new locations, the Hanauer Landstraße was in need of special policies directed towards raising the appeal of the location for investors and users from the service sector. These
policies mainly included infrastructure investments. The Leitbild aimed to function as the catalyst of positivism towards potential users and investors as well as to current landowners.

**Economic and spatial restructuring in World City Frankfurt**

As we saw above, the overall erosion of the industrial sector and the rise of the (financial) services sector led to a turnaround in Frankfurt’s fortunes as an economic location. Because of the boom in the Frankfurt financial complex, the city turned out to be a ‘winner’ in the processes of economic and spatial restructuring, since the financial sector filled the gaps (physically as well as functionally) in the urban structure that the disappearing industries had left behind (Lanz, 1996: 104). The continuous growth of the financial complex and the growing attraction of Frankfurt as an international financial node had consequences for the spatial needs of companies. As we saw in the previous section, the western urban core remained the central area designated for the financial complex, while it also maintained and reinforced its magnetism for the leading companies in this industry.
From 1985 onwards there was a new wave of plans for office towers. In comparison with the offices provided during the 1970-1985 period, the new plans entailed a leap in height. During the former period, the altitude of the highest offices was between 100 and 170 metres. The *Doppeltürme* (double towers) of the *Deutsche Bank* — completed in 1984 — were 155 meters high, and were the final expression of the office generation of the 1970s. The newly-planned offices (MesseTurm — 256.5 metres, Kronenhaus/Westend Centre — 208 metres — Trianon — 186 metres, Commerzbank — 258.7 metres) were often higher than 200 metres, and built in higher densities in the *Westend* and the *Bankenviertel*. These plans marked the onset of a second highrise fever (Bartetzko, 2001: 72) that was comparable to that of the 1970s. The MesseTurm, developed with substantial backing by the city of Frankfurt, was a signal sent out by
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the city officials to developers to trigger new investment in the tight office market in Frankfurt, where the former vacancies were quickly filled and the expected yearly demand for new offices varied between 150,000 and 240,000 square metres (Lieser & Keil, 1988: 2123). The new drift in the office provision scene caused a new wave of intensification within the existing built-up structure, mainly in the Bankenviertel and along the Mainzer Landstraße, situated at the edge of the Westend Area, towards the Messe.

Regional developments

The expansion of the headquarters district in the inner city of Frankfurt also had some consequences for the whole region. Keil and Ronneberger (1994: 148) speak of the housing and back-office needs of the growing urban core that influenced the development of more peripheral areas. According to them, these “have virtually been ‘flood-control’ devices for the booming inner city economy, sites of back offices and routine functions of banks and other businesses located in the core. (...) Some communities, especially those along the booming Taunus periphery have, in the wake of such tremendous pressure, given up virtually all individual paths of development, situating themselves solely in relationship to the demands generated by the downtown.”

In the course of the 1980s, the character of the investments in suburban office parks changed. Initially, the back offices of the growing inner city companies settled mainly in the periphery. However, the growth of speculative investments in offices initiated the development of new types of office park. Investors sought profits in the suburbs and built ‘flexible office cities’ with ‘signature architecture’ close to the main motorways, the airport, and the Frankfurter Kreuz in areas with low company settlement taxes and land prices. In a ring surrounding the urban core, investors initiated the expansion of a growing belt of luxurious, monumental office cities such as Niederrad (in Frankfurt), Eschborn and Kaiserlei (in the suburbs), partially imitating the urban core in order to attract possible tenants (Noller & Ronneberger, 1995; Noller, 1994). Increasingly, these flexible spaces started to replace the low-profile industrial parks, which in turn sought new spaces even further out into the periphery (Ronneberger, Lanz & Jahn, 1999: 57).

The dynamics in the periphery took on their own logic and were more independent of the developments in the urban core. The strongest autonomous trigger of developments outside the urban core was the Airport. In 1988, 25 million passengers made use of the Airport, and the ‘city next to the city’ (Lieser & Keil, 1988: 2127) housed over 45,000 employees in its numerous offices, hotels, and
airport-related businesses. Although the culture offensive in Frankfurt had attracted attention during the 1980s, planned investments in the airport surpassed those put into culture: while 1 billion D-Marks have been invested in culture since 1970, 5.3 billions were planned for investment in the Airport up to 2000 (Lieser & Keil, 1988).

In the meantime, airport-related activities started to diffuse to other locations in the urban periphery, especially those “activities that have little to do with the workings of the Airport itself, yet which need to be located close to it for logistical reasons,” such as the software and data-processing industries that have been settling down in the area between Rodgau to the east and the Taunus hills to the west of Frankfurt (Keil & Ronneberger, 1994: 149). Furthermore, in supply and transport logistics, the growth of flexible production led to a growing need for regional distribution centres.

Despite this proliferation of various urbanisation processes throughout the Frankfurt metropolitan region, the coordination of political and administrative activities on a supra-local scale remained problematic, even though the 1985 regional land-use plan of the UVF came into force in 1987. Although this very extensive and detailed plan gave widespread prestige to the joint authority, it never became successful, because of its strange shape, lack of local acceptance, the primacy of municipalities in land-use planning, and remaining intra-regional conflicting interests resulting from the form of the local revenue taxes (Freund, 2003: 132-137).

8.5 The collapse of the CDU government

In 1987, Wolfram Brück succeeded Walter Wallmann, who had then been Mayor for nine years. Wallmann, who was invited to become Minister President of Hesse, following Holger Börn of the SPD, left at a time when the City Council could no longer continue the prestigious and expensive investments made in the city, because of the troubling state of the city’s budget. So Brück could not fall back on the ‘glamour’ of these big, impressive, world-level city investments. Instead, the main political projects entailed down-to-earth everyday matters (Balser, 1995: 435). In contrast with earlier years, when the citadels of the world city strengthened the position of Wallmann and the CDU, the downside of 11 years of ‘world city policies’ became ever more apparent in the city of Frankfurt. The years of urban policies for world city formation had left an indelible mark on the city. The ‘world
city citadels’ in the form of the Fair, the Airport, and the banking district were not the only consequences of the particularly commercial real-estate driven urban politics (housing policies were gradually being dismantled); the social consequences were also evident. Social integration had been the orphan of urban politics during the Wallmann regime, which had addressed social problems of growing unemployment and the lack of integration of ethnic minorities by using such ‘visible’ symbolic policies as the creation of spectacular buildings and clearing the drug addicts and prostitutes out of the inner city and the metro-stations (Eckhardt, 2002). However, since two thirds of the population had not been adversely affected by the social marginalisation that was correlated with these world city policies, the support was vast during almost the entire era, and therefore the disintegration only began when these image policies began to overshadow the comfortable lives of the supporters of the conservative regime. The ‘illusion’ of the world city and the politics deriving from it, Ronneberger and Keil (1995: 297) argue, had an annihilating effect on both the social and ecological structures of Frankfurt, and these could no longer be disguised by the ruling elite.

Because the opposition had become better acquainted with the skills of aggressively pointing out these downsides, the CDU was increasingly pushed into defensive manoeuvrings. Their image as the absolute leader of the city became hollow. In defence of the trend taken, Brück emphasised the accomplishments of the CDU government with regards to the inner city and the cultural transformation, which he thought had earned for Frankfurt the title of Cultural Metropolis. Moreover, he expressed his optimism with respect to the future of the city, emphasising the city’s further economic development as the Mainmetropole with a growing base of banks and service sector companies.

From 1987 onwards, as a consequence of the plans developed from 1984, office development again reached a high peak and the development axes proposed in the Leitplan were slowly filled with plans for a new generation of prestigious high-rise office buildings. For instance, the plan for the skyline determining the Messe-Turm was put before the city council in 1986. However, in spite of the recovery of the office market during the second half of the 1980s, the CDU prognosis of a need for 100,000 new square meters office space per year was grossly overstated.

In 1987, the protests against further densification of the inner city began to build up again. First, there were protests against the densification of the office-landscape in the Westend now that the planning of two large office buildings on the Mainzer Landstraße was to be realised. Second, there were protests against the
Table 8.3, Percentages of votes obtained by the main political parties during Municipal elections from 1977 – 1989 in Frankfurt a.M.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SPD</th>
<th>CDU</th>
<th>Green Party</th>
<th>FDP</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>39.9</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch Frankfurt am Main, various years

development of two public buildings in the historic inner city, on a spot that was of enormous significance for Frankfurt's Jewish heritage: the Börneplatz. When construction workers discovered the foundations of the former Jewish buildings, the public at large was of the opinion that construction should be stopped. Mayor Brück could not however be persuaded: construction was to be continued and, when protesters occupied the premises, he sent in the police. These demonstrations were against the politics of modernisation, which were perceived to fail to take non-economic motives into account. The protests were some of the most serious factors leading to the electoral losses of the CDU in 1989 (Balser, 1995: 438).

However, it was the ill-chosen anti-Cohn Bendit campaign that ultimately tipped the political scales towards the left again. Cohn Bendit, who had been an active opponent of the regime during the Westend riots of the late 1960s and the early 1970s, had been a member of the Green Party since the early 1980s, and by 1989 had become party leader. The nationalist CDU campaign, partly directed against Cohn Bendit, had important anti-Semitic elements (Ronneberger & Keil, 1995: 297), which the public held against the CDU. Moreover, the careful politics of consensus that had made Wallmann so successful gradually slid into political polarisation — a tendency from which not only the left profited. After 17 years of absence, the NPD (an ultra nationalist party), to the political right of the CDU, was re-elected with 7 seats on the city council. After election night on March 12 1989, it had become clear that an end had come to 12 years of conservative city politics and city governance. The CDU lost 17 seats and dropped to 36, while the SPD gained 6 and climbed to 40. Together with the Green Party (from 6 to 10), they could now form the city government with SPD leader Volker Hauff as the Mayor. This change of representation implied the radical turn in urban politics and governance that is discussed in the next chapter.
Table 8.4, Regime of urbanisation, 1977-1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected regime of urbanisation</th>
<th>Realised regime of urbanisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Market: stagnation of the industrial and service sectors, consolidation of the financial district;</td>
<td>- Market: stagnation of the industrial sector – growth of the financial cluster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- State: growing importance of the electorate in urban development policies – national economic recovery policies – public-private integrated plan making – local social housing politics and advanced politics of accommodation;</td>
<td>- State: dominance of economic interests in setting the local policy agenda – neo-liberal turnaround in economic policies – public-private partnerships – place marketing/image politics/cultural turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Space: urban de-industrialisation – extension of main auto-oriented infrastructures – integrated solutions for housing and office development.</td>
<td>- Space: urban de-industrialisation – extension of main auto-oriented infrastructures – flagship developments for culture – extension of Fair, Airport, Banking cluster – further officification in the western inner city</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.6 Analysis of the regime of urbanisation and structure of provision

The planning practices of the 1970s, in which democratic planning on a small, sub-city scale had become customary, had produced an abundance of district zoning and development plans. The consequence of this reorientation of planning to the sub-city level was that no overall plans were conceived. The conservative government wanted to change this state of affairs, because it was in need of an appealing and attractive new image for the future city that could unite strategically important factions of Frankfurt’s population behind the socio-spatially selective politics of world-city extension.

In contrast with what might be expected, the electorate was kept at a distance from urban planning and the decisions on the provision of space, and social policy disappeared fundamentally into the background. Instead, urban development planning became a public-private undertaking within a small circle of place shapers, and the public at large was pacified by flagship investments in culture and image.

*Büro Speer*, which the city council had adopted as the strategic planning agency for the city,¹ was commissioned to develop a plan to guide future investments. The resulting *Leitplan für die Frankfurter Innenstadt* was approved by the City Council without questioning either of the starting points: the densification of

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¹ Even to the extent that the planning department became demoted to the level of a mere executor of the plans developed by *Büro Speer* (see Balser, 1995: 439)
the high-rise landscape in the western part of the inner city; balancing the east-west gradient of the city. This latter idea seemed to be a cosmetic operation, and confirmed the view that planners have a spatial way of looking at the city on maps, looking for a balance that may only be visible, or even felt, on such maps. However, many of the considerations expressed by the city council and the planning department did not concern ideas derived from ‘urban design’. Their concern was with the overwhelming pressure of the office market on the western part of the city together with the disinvestment from the eastern part of the city, which had become increasingly peripheral in an economic sense.

However, the capital government elite was spatially selective towards the western part of the city, socially selective to the gentrified new urban middle class, and functionally selective towards economic interests. Such selectivity finally backfired into electoral losses and the necessary reorientation of the urbanisation regime.

The local structure of office provision
In the 1980s it became clear that the developer-oriented structure of provision had, to some extent, survived its own economic success, despite its inherent social contradictions of insensitive speculation and the associated eviction of residents. The new era of grand scheme planning, which culminated in the 1983 City Leitplan, gave developers very clear investment certainty in parts of the Westend, but also along newly designated axes. In this plan, the developer-oriented structure of provision found many footholds for further development. However, speculative office building was toned down during the early 1980s. In the second half of the 1980s, it was the big banks with their plans for new headquarters offices that triggered new zest into Frankfurt’s office markets. The big banks commissioned the construction of a new type of office building that was much higher than those of earlier generations.

It became increasingly clear in the 1980s that not only did the inner city area profit from the popularity of Frankfurt as a financial centre, but also office locations in the urban periphery were increasingly becoming interesting settlement areas for companies in the services sector, and consequently for developers. The development of office parks and data-processing areas in small suburban communities became increasingly speculative. While the office city Niederrad could largely be typified as a central city spin-off location (Noller & Ronneberger, 1995: 58), many new developments across the region had their own development dynamics, related to the growth of data-processing industries, software industries,
ICT, flexible production and distribution. The suburban office cities also profited from the further development of the headquarters economy, providing space for industrial headquarters.

*Regulating Urban Office Provision*

Socio-spatial regulation, planning processes, and the conflicts concerning spatial imaginaries

The regulatory processes that were developed during the CDU term of office were a departure from the former regulatory processes, but in the meantime there was quite heavy dependence on trends set in the 1960s and 1970s. Since it had become clear that the rise of the service sector in the advanced western world was becoming dominant, and that Frankfurt was favourably situated in terms of basic economic structure, the local economic politics became geared towards third sector intensification. So, instead of opposing the restructuring of the inner city as an office district, this process was supported, and its detrimental consequences were compensated by heavy investments in the city's cultural environment (*cultural metropolis*). The new urban management adopted an aggressive style of place politics that built on the formative idea of an international metropolis that could rise from the strong, but up to that time relatively small and nationally-oriented city. The urban middle class was persuaded to back this image of the new Frankfurt, and urban development plans were all geared towards the achievement of this task.

The local growth coalition that consequently developed built on the connections between the urban management and the Fair, the Airport, the Railway Company, public-private development companies, and major architects and planning agencies. Together, these agents advanced the extension of the pillars of the world city they had envisaged: the CBD, the Airport, and the Fair. Through strategic plans and development schemes, investments were guided towards these 'world city citadels'. The rise of Frankfurt as a world city was supported by the recovery of the world market, the associated further rise of the financial sector in the city, and the fading away of the protest movements.

During the 1980s, the mutually strengthening processes of the peripheralisation of the centre and the centralisation of the periphery were becoming evident in Frankfurt. In this process, the growth of the urban core and its offshoots in the periphery was increasingly paralleled by self-sustained peripheral expansion. However, urbanisation politics built on the traditional view of the relationship between city and periphery, and consequently defined urban phenomena from the point of view of the core that needed the periphery as a compensatory space (Keil & Ronneberger, 1994). Although the tendencies described indicate the end of the classic relationship between the city and the
periphery, the planning policies of the Wallmann regime gave the political answer to the demands associated with the growing importance of Frankfurt as an international economic centre by emphasising the classic core-periphery model.

To a large extent, the core-periphery model was still being emphasised during the 1980s. As we saw, the Wallmann-elite projected its locational policies mainly on the urban scale in order to incorporate the increasingly global capital flows in a central urban space: the western part of the inner city. This district thus increasingly became the spatial manifestation of the global dynamics in a local space, while other areas inside the city of Frankfurt have remained relatively untouched by the highly selective international capital flows. On the other hand, suburban municipalities were also averse to the ‘big city’ of Frankfurt, so that the regional cooperation that was envisaged with the creation of the *Umlandverband* never became a reality.

The white-collar employees were looked after carefully in Frankfurt’s new urban politics, because they were the foundation of the legitimisation of the new regime. They found jobs in the world city, superb homes in the urban periphery and the suburbs as well as in the gentrified parts of the inner city, and culture in the restored historic inner city and along the *Museumsufer*. Immigrants, however, were not included in the regulatory processes. Their position on the labour market deteriorated, because it became increasingly knowledge intensive; their position also deteriorated on the regional housing market, where housing projects were threatened by conversion into offices, while the development of new social housing was neglected.

The social problems of the development of the world city were accompanied by ecological problems that became the centre of conflict during the whole CDU era. Arguments were concentrated on the development of *Startbahn West*, the expansion of the Airport. For almost a decade, this outgrowth of the Airport was contested by peaceful and more militant protesters alike, both from the region and from the city of Frankfurt, who challenged the relentless priority of economic growth over ecological preservation.

As the analysis reveals, the local growth coalition was cut short in 1989 by the electoral victory of the SPD and the Green Party. The CDU was punished for its ill-chosen campaign, the enormous financial problems of the city, and the neglect of both social and ecological development. The new political scene was more polarised, with a large left-wing block led by the SPD, as well as an unprecedented right wing growth of the NPD. The question remains whether the
collapse of the conservative urban politics of the CDU caused regulatory mechanisms to falter, or just led to putting old wine in new bottles.

8.7 Conclusion: the regime of urbanisation during the Wallman era

The regime of urbanisation (see figure 8.3) during the period in which the CDU was the leading political party in the city of Frankfurt can be characterised as unbridled economic expansion politics, combined with culture-based identity politics and the clearing up of the public and private spaces in the inner city that had come under the influence of petty street crime. The elite growth machine of Conservative Government, Airport, and Fair Directorate and CBD capital developed a practice of *ad hoc* economic development planning (in which the private planning agency Speer played a central part) and continued its *laissez faire* politics with regard to inner city office development. Social politics on the other hand, especially housing policy, were toned down considerably. They were made
subordinate to the extension of the ‘superstructures’ of the expanding world city and the related expensive cultural offensive.

The national neo-conservative liberal policies supported the local growth regime. The fierce confrontations that the national government was willing to face up to for the extension of the Airport, the pivotal position of private initiative in the neo-conservative regime, together with the strengthening of the D-Mark conveniently combined with the local growth regime into a socio-spatially selective regime of urbanisation: the spatial demands that derived from structural economic change were translated straightforwardly into local urbanisation and accumulation projects.

Such a neat translation cannot be said to have occurred at the regional level, where fragmentation, ill will, and adversarial economic development strategies dominated metropolitan urbanisation. The UVF possessed neither the legal basis nor the legitimacy to turn these relationships around. This lack of regional institutional unity was beneficial for economic interests and developers, who were welcomed and supported in both Frankfurt and the many suburban municipalities.

The relentless economic expansion, the poor financial position of the Frankfurt city council after years of investments in culture, the selective exclusion of important parts of the urban middle and lower class households, and the political polarisation that put the CDU up against both the growing Green Party, the ultra-nationalist NPD and the rejuvenated SPD initiated a new change in the political regime, which is described in the next chapter.