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Governing sustainable multimodality in the Berlin-Brandenburg metropolitan region

Multimodality and intermodality are often conflated with shared micromobility, i.e., e-scooters or e-bikes. However, combining different modes of transport is far from a new phenomenon. This paper explores some preliminary findings on how sustainable multi-and intermodality, in this case, the combination of walking or cycling with rail passenger transport, has developed in post-reunification Berlin-Brandenburg metropolitan region. While there has been research on the role that rail infrastructure has played in reconnecting the iconic divided city, the role of 'soft' or active mobility remains underresearched. This paper looks at the broader Berlin-Brandenburg metropolitan region rather than the city itself and investigates the role that sustainable multimodality has been playing in reconnecting the city with its surroundings. This is important, as the sub- and exurban tend to be seen as places dominated by car-based mobility and where a transition towards more active and sustainable mobility is most challenging. Active mobility is therefore rarely considered a viable solution there, even though historically both walking and cycling have also strongly shaped the exurban. This paper seeks to investigate the governance of sustainable mobility practices spanning across the rural-urban spectrum in the region. Based on a series of interviews with stakeholders from the civil society and local politicians, and a review of planning documents from the period, the paper seeks to recreate the polity, policy and politics governing sustainable multimodality in the decades after reunification. By exploring these processes, this paper hopes to contribute to contemporary debates on transitions towards sustainable mobility regimes by providing some historical context on the development of multimodality in the Berlin-Brandenburg capital region.