

- *Shrinking cities – Regeneration processes – Urban policy – Urban strategies – Eastern Germany*

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**Urban Regeneration –
Strategies of Shrinking Cities in Eastern Germany**

*Urbane Regenerierung –
Strategien schrumpfender Städte in Ostdeutschland*

With 1 Figure and 1 Table

This contribution is meant to contrast the often negative images and scenarios of demographic change in eastern German cities by a more differentiated picture, by discussing regeneration processes running parallel – and sometimes even opposite – to shrinking. In this context, the regeneration of cities is understood as a complex process including demographic, socio-economic and physical dimensions. In the first part of the article the term will be discussed and some conceptional aspects will be presented. The second part will present evidence for a differentiated development of medium-sized towns. In the third part, we will present the hypothesis that strategies of urban development influence regeneration processes. This hypothesis will be evaluated by the examples of three cities with different regeneration approaches: Brandenburg an der Havel, Görlitz and Greifswald. Finally we will draw some general conclusions on urban development policy in eastern Germany.

**1. Regeneration Processes in
Shrinking Cities**

1.1 On the problem context of shrinkage

Until the turn of the millennium, the shrinking of cities was hardly a topic for urban studies. First approaches in the context of economically underdeveloped regions in western Germany (*Häussermann* and *Siebel* 1988) were not continued as a

result of Germany's reunification and the growth expectations associated with this. It is only since about the turn of the millennium that the taboos have been removed from the topic of shrinking processes and these have been more broadly discussed even in urban studies which previously had mostly been focussed on growth. Particularly in the UK and the US the debate on shrinking cities and regions started some decades earlier. Given the decline of traditional industrial cities and regions

in the North of England (e.g. Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield) or in the US-American “rustbelt” (e.g. Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit), in these countries “urban decline” and “urban decay” were a topic of discussion for urban studies already in the 1950s. Accordingly, it was possible to observe opposite developments and to try out urban-political strategies of coping with shrinking processes at a much earlier stage. Since the 1990s, particularly in the UK, “urban regeneration” has become the central concept for such strategies (*Roberts and Sykes 2000: 17*). In Section 1.2 we transfer this concept from British urban studies and policy to the context of shrinking cities in eastern Germany.

However, at first this requires a definition: Which processes of urban development are actually meant by “shrinking”? In the context of many public debates and scientific studies in Germany, “shrinking cities” are often exclusively equated with a decline in population (see the discourse analysis in *Brandstetter et al. 2005*). Such a one-dimensional demographic view, however, seems rather limited and neglects the depth of actual phenomena. Rather, since the 1990s, shrinking cities in eastern Germany have been characterised by a multi-dimensioned eclipsing of demographic as well as physical-structural processes (*Gatzweiler et al. 2003*). In this context we distinguish the following sub-processes:

- The shrinking of the employment basis of cities as a result of deindustrialisation and the closing down of industries. Mono-structural industrial cities, the employment basis of which rested strongly on products which were outmoded or no longer competitive (e.g. steel, textile, automobile or port cities) are particularly affected by the decline in jobs. Deindustrialisation comes along with a shrinking employment basis in manufacturing. This does not foreclose the further existence of highly productive industrial sites in deindustrialised cities as, due to “jobless growth”, it may well happen that the economic performance of manufacturers is increasing while employment is shrinking or stagnating. Examples for this are Eisenhüttenstadt or Schwedt/Oder. After deindustrialisation occurred, few cities succeeded in starting a process of reindustrialisation and building up a new employment basis in the manufacturing sector (e.g. Ludwigsfelde, Eisenach).
- The shrinking of the population due to labour-market related migration. Long-distance migration to prospering cities and regions is a kind of “voting by feet” as a result of a lack of jobs and high unemployment. In eastern Germany, the essential cause for this is the described process of deindustrialisation after the changes of 1989. The massive loss of employment in the manufacturing sector could not be compensated by a growth of employment in the service sector. In contradiction to the theories of sectoral structural change, in some peripheralised cities in eastern Germany even employment in the service sector decreases.
- The shrinking of the population due to housing-market related migration. In the sense of “voting by feet”, moving to suburban locations is a result of changed housing preferences, an increased trend to become a homeowner and a marked difference of real estate prices between the city and the municipalities in the suburban fringe. Suburbanisation of housing and retailing is not an expression of shrinking processes but, on the contrary, a wealth-related process, as moving away from the city is the result of the actors demanding more space. Indeed, the growth of municipalities in the suburban area occurs at the expense of the core city. However, suburbanisation increases the interconnectedness of urban regions, as in most cases the labour market is still connected to the core city. In the past, some cities tried to compensate for this kind of urban shrinking by administrative incorporation.

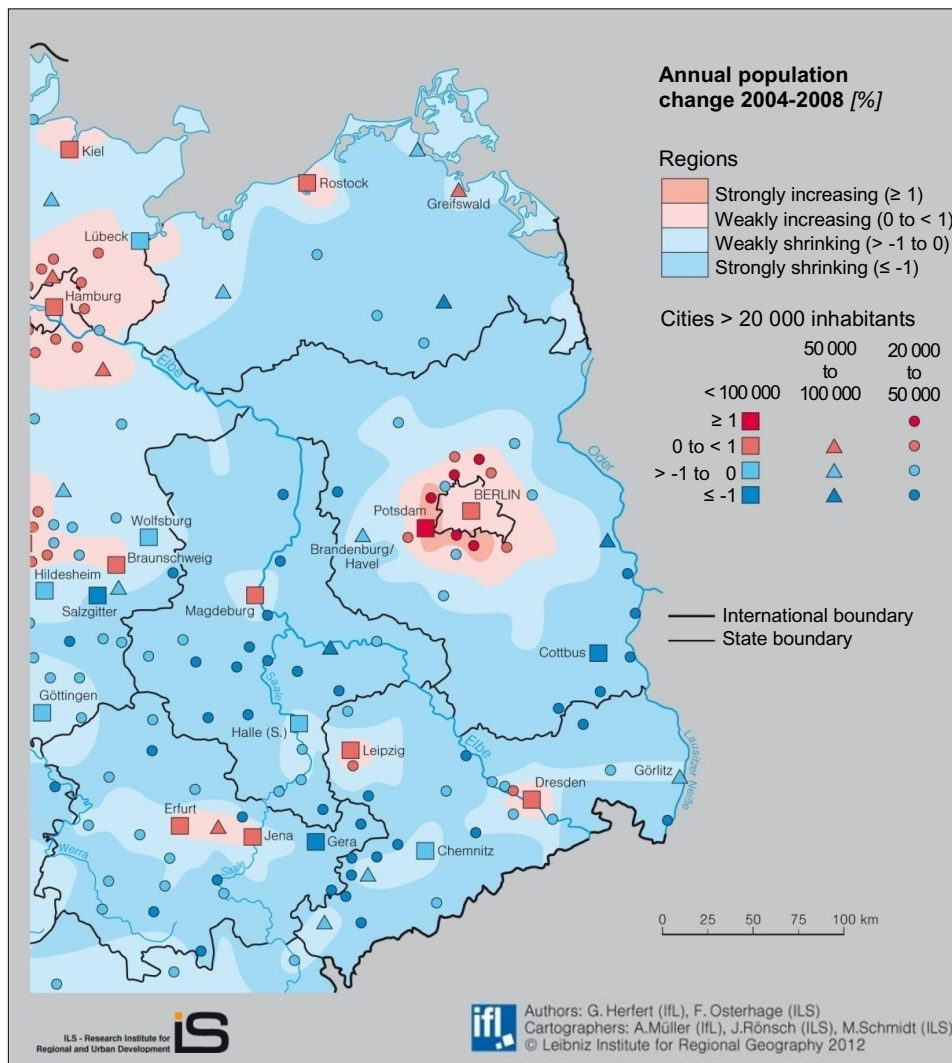


Fig. 1 Shrinking and growing cities in eastern Germany (Herfert 2011)
Schrumpfende und wachsende Städte in Ostdeutschland (Herfert 2011)

- Finally, the shrinking of the natural population as a result of birth deficits. Particularly in eastern Germany and Eastern Europe this is a result of great economic and social insecurity – the so-called post-socialist “transformation shock”. However, as already since the 1980s both in eastern and in western Germany the birth rate has

been lower than the mortality rate, also the change of lifestyles as a result of a higher level of education plays an important role here. Since the “Second Demographic Transition” – as demographers call it (Birg 2006) – cities definitely depend on immigration for the reproduction and stabilisation of their number of population. Cit-

ies are able to avoid shrinking only if they are attractive for migrants. This again depends decisively on the workforce needs of the urban economy and the quality of urban housing.

1.2 On the term “regeneration”

In the past, German urban studies have only very rarely used the term “regeneration”. The term is found in older west German publications from the 1970s and 1980s and was not taken up again in the discourses of the following decades. There, the “regeneration of the city” is interpreted from the point of view of urban development (Hillebrecht 1975) and housing economy (Kujath 1986), in the sense of renewal or modernisation. A first definition of “regeneration” in the context of shrinking cities in eastern Germany conceived the term in the sense of a positive intention and connected it to the normative idea of a “recreation” and “strengthening” of the complex system of the city (Keim 2001).

To avoid such a normativity for our research approach, our understanding of “regeneration” is oriented at the Latin *regenerare* – which may be translated as “newly creating”. Thus, we make renewal processes in cities the focus of our interest. The immigration of new inhabitants, the creation of new jobs, the physical renewal of old or abandoned buildings or the renewed use of derelict areas in cities are less normative terms than recreation or improvement.

As a conceptional approach, “regeneration” refers to the context of shrinking processes in cities. To account for the multi-dimensional processes of urban shrinking in an appropriate way, a complex understanding of “regeneration” is necessary which integrates demographic, socio-economic and physical-urban development aspects. This is why, at the structural level, we define regeneration processes as follows: Regeneration processes are processes of demo-

graphic, socio-economic and urban-developmental renewal in those cities and urban areas which are affected by problems of a decline in jobs and population as well as by problems of abandoned buildings and decay. Regeneration processes include the immigration of new inhabitants (demographic renewal), the creation of new employment (socio-economic renewal) as well as the re-use of buildings and spaces (physical renewal).

This definition is based on a complex understanding of the city as a municipal spatial entity where housing and (gainful) employment are two fundamental functions. In this context, shrinking cities are characterised by an excess supply of housing and workforce which results in vacancies, unemployment and emigration. Thus, new immigrants and new jobs are essential conditions to work against the shrinking of the population and the employment basis of cities. At the same time, however, also the physical-spatial level plays an important role for cities if they want to attract immigrants and jobs. In our understanding, the three levels of in-migration, creation of new jobs and physical-spatial attractiveness of cities are mutually influencing each other and each may work as a booster for the regeneration process.

1.3 Distinguishing regeneration from other terms

In the context of shrinking cities in eastern Germany, a number of “re” terms are currently being used in urban research and policies. But many terms are used in an imprecise way in this context and are interpreted in rather different ways. Despite the sectoral point of view of many approaches, there is a great deal of overlap concerning the meaning of terms. Without claiming to present a thorough discourse analysis, we nevertheless try to distinguish our understanding of “regeneration” from these competing approaches. In the following, the most important approaches will be sketched briefly and their

limitations for an analysis and explanation of urban development will be shown.

1.3.1 Reurbanisation (*Reurbanisierung*)

The reurbanisation approach has been used for both quantitative and qualitative urban studies. Already in the 1980s, a group of researchers from Rotterdam defined it from a demographic point of view and by a quantitative model (*van den Berg et al. 1982*). This oft-quoted cycles model distinguishes the development phases of urbanisation, suburbanisation, disurbanisation and reurbanisation. Number of inhabitants is the exclusive criterion, and three types of space are distinguished: core city, surrounding area and city region. Reurbanisation is based on the assumption of absolute or relative gains in population in core cities at the expense of the surrounding area, thus it assumes a possible reversal of suburbanisation processes. This model describes exclusively migration processes on the housing market within a city region and does not include socio-economic aspects of the labour market. Qualitative urban research defines reurbanisation as the relocation of certain household types – singles, young couples without children, flat-shares, single parents – towards the inner cities (*Haase et al. 2006, Haase 2008*).

1.3.2 Restructuring

A number of urban-economic and -geographic approaches uses the term “restructuring” to describe either shifts of the international system of city clusters or the sectoral structural change of individual cities from an industrial to a knowledge economy (*Hall 1991, Peck and Ward 2002*). The sectoral understanding of restructuring assumes an economic structural crisis of cities as a result of deindustrialisation, which may be overcome by developing “postindustrial” economic structures. International studies show

that in most cases monostructural industrial cities try to combat the structural crisis by fostering postindustrial structural change (*Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung 2005*). These days, also in German cities services branches such as financial services or consultancy, research and development, media and tourism contribute much more to the growth of employment than manufacturing, the employment share of which is declining due to rationalisation (*Gatzweiler et al. 2003: 567*). The restructuring approach refers to the employment basis of cities, i.e. to an essential socio-economic factor of urban development which also influences the degree of in- and out-migration and thus the number of inhabitants. However, this approach neglects the housing function of cities as well as their urban developmental-physical fabric as an attractivity factor.

1.3.3 Revitalisation (*Revitalisierung*)

“Revitalisation” is an urban policy approach which is particularly used in the context of the preservation of urban monuments. The starting point of revitalisation is physical buildings, particularly in historic city centres. It aims at a “revitalisation” of building structures which have been abandoned for quite some time and are threatened by decay, as well as of elements of public space. The revitalisation approach starts out from a city’s physical structure; it therefore is supply-oriented and looks for new ways of using old buildings (*Sulzer 2007*). The question, however, of what actually determines demand on housing and labour markets is usually not dealt with.

1.3.4 Urban renewal (*Stadterneuerung*)

Since the introduction of urban development funding at the beginning of the 1970s, the term “urban renewal” has been well-established, first in western and since the 1990s also in eastern Germany. Urban renewal includes the improvement of

the physical substance of clearly defined parts of a city. These are particularly inner cities and neighbourhoods from the end of the 19th century, but also sub-centres as well as new residential areas. An essential tool of urban renewal is redevelopment measures in urban planning. By this the law means “measures by which an area is essentially improved or restructured to remedy shortcomings of urban development” (German building law, *Baugesetzbuch* § 136). “Shortcomings” refer to an area’s building structure or function. Since the 1980s, in West Germany, a more cautiously operating way of renewal by refurbishing existing buildings instead of demolishing entire areas has been successfully implemented. Thus, urban renewal in the stricter sense may be defined as an urban development approach which does not include the entire space of a city but only selected areas showing structural or functional deficits. In a wider sense, however, urban renewal may also be understood as a complex approach which is supposed to improve a neighbourhood’s social, economic and ecological situation.

1.3.5 Urban rebuilding (*Stadtumbau*)

In the 1990s this term was mostly used in the closer context of “ecological urban rebuilding”. As an action field of urban policy and urban development the term occurred after 2001/2002, with the advent of the funding programme “Urban Rebuilding East” (*Stadtumbau Ost*) in the new federal states. In a more narrow sense, urban rebuilding means a policy approach to reduce a surplus in the housing market. In the wider sense, it also means the restructuring of vacant housing areas and of monofunctional large housing estates (*Bodenschatz* 2003: 12). Sometimes “urban rebuilding” is even more extended, in the sense of a political-planning reaction to demographic and economic structural change in cities, and sometimes it is terminologically equated with “regeneration” (Bundesamt für Bau-

wesen und Raumordnung 2005). However, a more narrow definition of “urban rebuilding” is most frequently used which starts out from a housing policy approach to reduce vacancies.

1.4 *Regeneration = renewed growth?*

If regeneration processes include demographic, economic and physical renewal processes to counteract shrinkage, the question arises whether regeneration is actually based on new hopes for growth. Regeneration might be understood as another growth cycle in the context of the historic ups and downs of cities. Indeed, the Anglo-Saxon debate often connects urban regeneration to the hope of renewed growth. Some researchers interpret the term as “regrowth” in the sense of economic activities (*Couch et al.* 2003: 2). Some demography researchers also use the term “urban resurgence” in the sense of a revival of cities, as a period of population growth following a previous period of shrinking population (*Turok and Mykhnenko* 2006). However, quantitative analyses of a total of 310 European cities show that according to this strict definition in the period between 1960 to 2005 only 42 cities could be classified as experiencing renewed growth – compared to 129 which were continuously shrinking and 94 showing uninterrupted growth (*Turok and Mykhnenko* 2006).

In addition, there is the urban sociological hypothesis according to which the increasing polarisation of cities results in a “break away from the previously uniform growth model of cities” and shrinking cities are a permanent “new type of urban development” (*Häussermann and Siebel* 1988: 83f.). This hypothesis is in marked contradiction with expectations for renewed growth. Does, therefore, the regeneration approach uncritically adhere to the growth paradigm and neglect the critical debates on “the end of the growing world” (*Kil* 2006)? Under current conditions in Germany, with a shrinking popu-

lation at the national level and declining international migration, demographic migration gains of one city can only occur at the expense of other cities and regions (Birg 2006). Any successful growth policy in one city will thus increase disparities in the wider area and result in shrinking elsewhere (Häussermann et al. 2008).

This indicates that it is not sufficient to define regeneration exclusively by quantitative and absolute growth parameters. Rather, regeneration implies that shrinkage or growth processes at the level of the city are always the result of the overall balance of births and mortalities, in- and out-migration, creation and loss of jobs. In addition, even in cities with structural vacancies in the housing market, residential development may still be observed. Thus, urban development is characterised by a parallelism of shrinking and regeneration processes, with respectively differing final results. Accordingly, even a relative decline in the shrinking dynamics may already indicate the beginning of a regeneration of cities, by which the number of inhabitants may be stabilised at a lower level.

2. Different Trajectories in Selected Eastern German Cities

Deindustrialisation, suburbanisation and birth deficits are three major factors for the shrinkage of cities; they have been in complex interaction in many cities in eastern Germany since the 1990s. Each of these factors is characterised by a specific dynamics and a specific chronological cycle. For example, whereas the suburbanisation dynamics has actually been decreasing in eastern German city regions since the end of the 1990s – with the exception of the area around Berlin –, due to the “demographic echo” the significance of the deficit in the birthrate and population ageing will increase in the future. The determining factor for urban development which is most difficult to predict is migration.

Accordingly, almost all cities and medium-sized towns in eastern Germany with more than 20,000 inhabitants have shown a permanent decline of their number of inhabitants since 1990. Particularly during the first half of the 1990s the population loss of cities – as a result of the high degree of suburbanisation-related migration – was clearly above that of the eastern German federal states as a whole. In the past decade, however, most larger cities in eastern Germany as well as some medium-sized towns were able to stop their population decline and stabilise their numbers of inhabitants. It is obvious that out-migration is decreasing and in-migration is increasing, particularly in-migration from the hinterland and above all by “education migrants”, i.e. younger members of the population in search of university education or other educational facilities (Herfert 2007). As a consequence, these cities indeed show a younger-than-average population. For example, since 2006 the two cities of Dresden and Leipzig have been those cities with the youngest population in the federal state of Saxony and they have, in addition, been able to stabilise the average age of their population during the last few years.

Although other cities have been able to achieve a balance of in-migration and out-migration in the past few years, given the negative natural balance in the population figures this will nevertheless be connected to a decline in the numbers of inhabitants in cities in general. Still, this indicates that the scenario of an increasing “downward spiral” in shrinking cities along the chain ‘economic weakness – emigration – impoverishment – ageing population – declining financial power – declining investment’ (Hanne-mann 2003) is not generally true and sometimes too pessimistic. Rather, the trend towards more balanced migration may as well be interpreted as a kind of “healthy downsizing” of cities. At the same time, an unequal distribution of in- and out-migration as well as social-spatial differentiations can be observed within cities, which indicates an increasing parallelism of growing, stabilising and still shrinking neighbourhoods.

Tab. 1 Shrinkage and regeneration of cities in east Germany
Schrumpfung und Regenerierung in ostdeutschen Städten

	Large and middle-sized cities in Eastern Germany (selected cases)	Population change 2004-2009 (%)	Migration rate (per 1000 inhabitants) 2004-2009 average	Employment change 2004-2009 (%)	Unemployment rate (%) 2004-2009 average
Shrinking cities (continuous population and job losses)	Hoyerswerda	-12,9	-20,8	-16,7	18,4
	Eisenhüttenstadt	-11,7	-17,3	-3,6	15,7
	Zeitzer Land	-10,0	-12,6	-7,9	22,5
	Suhl	-9,5	-13,3	-8,7	11,4
	Schwedt/Oder	-8,8	-15,0	-7,0	18,3
	Greiz	-8,6	-8,3	-4,5	15,0
	Staßfurt	-8,5	-10,8	-14,5	18,1
Shrinking cities in economic regeneration	Bitterfeld-Wolfen	-9,2	-13,0	+24,8	16,6
	Arnstadt	-3,0	-0,7	+21,4	14,2
	Borna	-8,4	-12,3	+19,5	18,0
	Ludwigsfelde	-1,1	-4,1	+18,9	10,0
	Bautzen	-3,3	-5,6	+12,0	16,4
	Neuruppin	-1,5	-0,3	+12,5	15,1
	Brandenburg a.d.H.	-3,5	-1,7	+5,1	15,6
Regenerating cities (population and job regrowth)	Görlitz	-3,8	-2,0	+3,9	19,6
	Dresden	+6,1	+9,1	+5,2	10,9
	Potsdam	+6,1	-10,4	+9,6	7,9
	Leipzig	+4,1	+8,9	+7,6	14,0
	Greifswald	+3,2	+6,4	+7,9	12,8
	Jena	+2,0	+5,0	-9,4	7,9
	Magdeburg	+1,7	+4,0	+3,1	13,4
Weimar	+1,2	+4,7	+4,3	10,9	

Source: Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung BBSR

However, there are also those cities, most of them in peripheral locations, which are still shrinking heavily, in respect of both their population number and their employment figures. This is usually connected to an increasing loss of significance as central places of administration or service locations. In addition, there are those

cities which have indeed succeeded in stabilising their numbers of jobs but are less attractive as residential places and, as a result, still suffer from massive population losses (e.g. the town of Bitterfeld-Wolfen in eastern Germany's centrally located "Solar Valley"). A study on different types of development in eastern German cities shows

differing regeneration trajectories for these cities, describing a total of nine different types of change in cities in eastern Germany – from dynamic big cities down to small, peripheral towns with extreme population losses (*Fröhlich and Liebmann 2009*). In this context, increasing social-spatial disparities between cities in the eastern German federal states become obvious.

The analysis of a few demographic and economic structural data, however, is insufficient. Growth and shrinking of the urban population cannot be understood – as it is still common with macro-structural approaches – simply as a result of demographic structural determinants and economic life cycles but must include the actual efforts of urban policy and civil society actors.

3. Strategic Responses of Regeneration – Three Examples

It is much debated in the research on local politics to which degree local politics can actually influence the structural development of the population and employment basis of cities (*Häusermann et al. 2008, Glock 2006*). The “Theory of Urban Decline” sees a link between processes of demographic and economic shrinkage in industrial cities and the ways local actors act. According to this theory, the predominance of the structure-preserving interests of local industrial elites in urban politics contributes to the continuation of shrinking processes (*Friedrichs 1993*). This provides an approach at explaining the shrinking of cities and the delay of urban regeneration. There is, however, a lack of theories which might define factors of local politics which are able to stimulate regeneration.

This is why in the following we will have a closer look at how local action may determine change in shrinking cities. In order to be able to explain differences between cities we will try to give evidence to the hypothesis that strategic approach-

es of urban development policy have a structural impact on regeneration processes. We refer to regeneration strategies aiming at a demographic, socio-economic and physical renewal in cities and neighbourhoods, to work against the decline of population and employment and against vacancies and decay. In this context, urban development policy includes all fields of politics which claim a steering function with regard to the future development of the entire city. In the special context of shrinking, this concerns most of the economic, housing and physical development policies, but it may as well include education, culture and other fields. The contribution is based on the results of a research project at the Leibniz-Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning (*Kühn and Liebmann 2009*). Using the three examples of the medium-sized towns of Brandenburg an der Havel, Görlitz and Greifswald we intend to shed light on different approaches of urban development policy as well as on visible regeneration processes in these towns.

3.1 Brandenburg an der Havel – blockades in a postindustrial town

Looking back to a history of one thousand years, Brandenburg an der Havel is the oldest city in the federal state of Brandenburg. From the 1870s to the end of the GDR in 1990, this town recorded a period of one hundred years of population growth. This was based on industrial enterprises which had been producing for the world market (pushchairs, bicycles, motorbikes, toys, after 1906 also automobiles) since the early period of the Second German Empire. With its steel and rolling mill, built between 1912 and 1914, as well as the expansion of armament production in the 1930s, Brandenburg an der Havel became one of the most important industrial cities in Germany. From about 34,000 in 1875, the number of inhabitants rose to 60,000 in 1910 and then to 91,000 in 1939. After extensive destruction during World War II, the building of a new steel and rolling mill

marked industrial reconstruction from 1950 onwards. In the former German Democratic Republic, Brandenburg an der Havel became the biggest producer of crude steel and thus a “steel city”. About 9,000 people were employed at the factory. In the year 1987 the city had its peak population with about 98,000 inhabitants.

With the closing of large parts of the steel and rolling mill in 1993, the city experienced a structural shock and deindustrialisation started. More than one third of the former jobs in the city were lost. While in 1990 22,000 employees were still working in manufacturing, this figure went down to about 6,800 in 2004; and a stagnating service sector in the town could not compensate for the enormous losses by deindustrialisation. The result is a structural unemployment rate of still about 15 per cent. Together with a declining birthrate, deindustrialisation-related migration from the city is the main cause for the demographic shrinking of the town. From 92,500 in the year 1990, the number of inhabitants went down to currently about 72,000 in 2011. According to existing predictions, the number of inhabitants will decrease further, to 59,000 by 2030 – i.e. about the level of 1910.

Since German unification urban development and economic policies of Brandenburg an der Havel have been little successful in maintaining the town’s former status of an industrial city. On the other hand, already in the 1990s local urban planning tried to foster the city’s postindustrial structural change. Potentials for postindustrial developments were seen most of all in the city’s historic heritage, in higher education – a college was established in the area of a former army barracks in 1992 – as well as in tourism and water sports. However, in the 1990s this strategic reorientation was met by blockades by the old industrial elites who had changed from the former steel mill to municipal administration positions and were oriented towards the existent working-class milieu. A social-scientific mi-

lieu study on the town stated: “Understanding the own region as a traditional manufacturing region restricts the inhabitants’ view, with the result that alternative future prospects are easily neglected.” (*Schwarzer and Schweigel* 1995: 277). The blockade of structural change after unification was also due to the high degree of personal continuity of local elites. The study describes a “lack of fundamental elite change in Brandenburg” (*Schwarzer and Schweigel* 1995: 279) because the technocratic functional elite had rotated into new positions in administration and the economy. This path dependency resulted in political conflicts about appropriate regeneration strategies of the city. Whereas one side hoped to attract new industries, the other side tried to develop Brandenburg an der Havel into a postindustrial city of water, culture and education.

The fact that a change towards soft location factors and a post-industrial urban vision of a city of water, culture and education was blocked gives evidence to the theory of urban decline referred to above, namely that old industrial elites slow down attempts at regeneration in deindustrialising cities. In the 1990s, the city’s structural change was delayed, compared with other cities in Brandenburg. This is also illustrated by the fact that during the 1990s the city’s actors started only gradually to discuss the more than 1000 years of local history and the architectural legacy of its history. Revaluing and renovating the historic city core has clearly lagged behind compared to activities in other cities. It is only in the most recent years that an increased dynamics of catching up can be observed. Furthermore, the future will show to what extent the college, the technology centre and start-ups on the area of the former steel mill will really become incubators of postindustrial employment. Only if the latter will considerably stimulate the labour market in the future, one will be able to see in how far the fashionable keyword of “knowledge-based urban development” may become a sustainable foundation for the regenera-

tion even of de-industrialised cities without a historic tradition as university locations. Experiences from other countries indicate that the structural change from an industrial to a service city is a process of decades. Nevertheless, concerning demographic and economic change there have been indications for a positive trend in the past few years. The restoration of the historic city centre has clearly gained momentum. Gradually the loss of jobs has come to a standstill, and 2007 was the first year with a slightly positive balance. Also education-related out-migration has been clearly reduced since 2003, in 2008 the balance was slightly positive for the first time.

3.2 Görlitz

Görlitz, Germany's easternmost city, today located on the border to Poland, had its first peak already in the 14th century which is documented today in the rich legacy of medieval and renaissance architecture in the urban core. Another climax in the 19th century was not only characterised by the city developing into an economic but also into a political and intellectual centre of the Oberlausitz region. In the second half of the 19th century, Görlitz became a provincial city, "most beautiful and richest in character", with theatres, museums, music festivals, a lively scene of clubs and associations as well as splendid architecture (Stadt Görlitz 2007). At this time, Görlitz became also particularly famous as a residential place for retired Prussian officers and civil servants, reaching a population maximum of about 95,000 inhabitants in 1940. After World War II, the parts of the city on the eastern banks of River Neiße became Polish Zgorzelec and Görlitz a truncated border town. As a result of the situation of a neglected provincial place, many of the younger people emigrated. Already from the 1950s onwards a continuous process of population decline occurred which even increased from the 1970s onwards. Between 1970 and 1990, Görlitz lost more

than 10 % of its population, and in 1990 there were only about 74,000 inhabitants in the city.

These processes gained even more momentum with the structural change in the wake of Germany's reunification. Between 1991 and 2001 the number of people employed in the manufacturing sector diminished from about 16,000 to 4,400, remaining stable at this very low level ever since. For years, the city had unemployment rates clearly above the east German average. In 2007 it was still 24.4 %. Between 1991 and 2001, with a decline by 23.5 %, there was also an immense loss of population. Three quarters of this decline were due to migration losses, and only one quarter to a negative natural change of the population (Stadt Görlitz 1998: 17). It is only since 2002/2003 that these dynamics have slowed down. Today Görlitz has about 55,000 inhabitants. Given these losses, it is not surprising that despite considerable efforts into restoring and modernising the historic buildings in Görlitz's urban core still more than one third of the existing flats are vacant (BMVBS und BBR 2007: 91).

Under these difficult conditions, in 2001 Görlitz applied to become "European Capital of Culture 2010". One of the leading initiators described the motivation for this application as follows: "[...] from a comparably hopeless starting position – economically, with regard to transport, demography, age structure and so on – how could you find something, some kind of a nucleus which might become self-multiplying [...] and give new hope. To finally attract attention, to say hello, there are people here [...], there are ideas here which are smart, which are funny, and like the Baron of the Lies these people are trying to lift themselves up by their own bootstraps." (quot. in *Liebmann and Fröhlich* 2009: 248).

Given the until then little successful effort of the city's political decision-makers to cope with the structural change, the application for "European Capital of Culture" became a new hope.

It was expected to result in more than only cultural attractiveness and recognition. Görlitz recurred to the important and unique features of the city – architecture and border town – and developed a coherent concept which on the one hand communicated a vision and on the other hand was supported by concrete individual projects, based on the expectation that a city's symbolic market value may rise the more, the more authentically and originally it stages its history, culture or urbanity (*Richter 2007: 263*).

Met by a great deal of public interest, in 2004 Görlitz reached the final round of the national competition, together with Essen. Then in 2006 the cities of Essen, Pécs and Istanbul were chosen as European Capitals of Culture 2010. Görlitz had been defeated in the final round.

With the failure of the application, Görlitz experienced a difficult phase which is rather typical for comparable situations. Despite the obvious positive effects of the application, old conflicts broke out again between supporters of the vision of a culture-led regeneration as a long-term model for urban development and opponents which considered culture just an “auxiliary engine of the economy” or a luxury in the sense of being a cost factor. Nevertheless it became clear that at a time when cities become more and more similar to each other in many respects and local particularities are increasingly threatened with getting lost, the staging of urban particularities becomes ever more important for increasing the symbolic value of a city.

Thus, the city is more and more successful with emphasising its special qualities as a residential place with a wide array of culture. This way, it is able to partly continue in its tradition as a “pensionopolis”, by actively stimulating older people to move to the city. The result is a meanwhile almost balanced migration account, an increasingly positive image of the city and declining vacancies in the urban core.

3.3 Greifswald

Greifswald is located in the thinly populated northeastern Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. In the 13th century the city, founded in the 12th century, contributed to founding the Hanseatic League, and in the 15th century it rose to become one of the first university cities in northern Europe. On the other hand, a more comprehensive industrial development started only at the end of the 1960s, with a nuclear power station being built near the city and the establishment of further industrial plants. This was connected to a strong population growth and the city's previously many-faceted profile as a city of trade, research, science and administration being eclipsed by industry. Between 1970 and 1989, the population rose by about 25,000 to roughly 70,000.

As in other cities, the period after unification was characterised by far-reaching deindustrialisation. Of the once about 15,000 jobs at the building site of the nuclear power station, only 1,200 survived for demolition works. As a result, until the mid-2000 decade Greifswald lost about 15,000 inhabitants.

In the 1990s – similar to Brandenburg an der Havel – the reaction of urban development policy in Greifswald rested essentially on continuing the path of industrial and trade development, which became obvious most of all by the urgent measures of planning and developing new industrial areas and technology parks. For example, the stock of well-developed trade areas of 320 ha was speedily extended by another 245 ha (Hansestadt Greifswald 1992: 9) which, however, was lying waste for a long time (*Kuder 2009*).

Only a guideline developed in the second half of the 1990s, based on a comprehensive development and opportunities analysis, opened up a wider range of possible development options, and the path towards creating a limited profile of the city was given up. Apart from further efforts

to attract trade and industry, the fields of university and science as well as culture and tourism were increasingly focused on as essential sectors of development. In this context, particularly the university was increasingly recognised as a crucial incubator for postindustrial structural change, and accordingly it was ever more intensively included in processes of urban development. The potential of this university becomes obvious, for example, by the increase in the number of students. Since 1990/91, this has grown from 3,200 to more than 12,300 today, with meanwhile almost two thirds coming from federal states other than Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Universität Greifswald 2009). The university's popularity among students is also documented in the German CHE university ranking which again and again sees the university at the top ranks for several subjects and disciplines (a.o. Medicine, Psychology, Law, German Studies, English Studies etc.). Since 1998, this ranking has been published annually by the weekly DIE ZEIT, it is based on more than 250,000 university students assessing the conditions of studies at German colleges and universities (ZEIT ONLINE 2010). Given the high numbers of students, Greifswald is meanwhile considered one of Germany's youngest cities. Accordingly, one quarter of the "heads" of households in Greifswald is younger than 30 years (GfK Geo-Marketing 2008). The City of Greifswald's clear commitment to its university was also illustrated by renaming the city "university and Hanseatic city". Meanwhile, particularly in the university-related environment, growth occurs (e.g. in the field of medical technology) which supports the change from industry-dependent to knowledge-based urban development. Accordingly, currently only 15 % of jobs (a total of 3,400 employees) are found in the field of trade and industry, including the construction industry. On the other hand, almost 85 % of jobs are in the tertiary sector. Today, 5,000 of Greifswald's almost 23,000 regularly employed work in the field of "scientific, technological

services and other business services" alone (Universitäts- und Hansestadt Greifswald 2009: 3). In addition, the restoration of the historic core and the development of a rich choice of cultural facilities has essentially contributed to Greifswald's rising attractiveness. As a consequence, not only the number of employees but also the number of inhabitants could be kept at a stable figure since the beginning of the 2000s. The city's overall vacancy rate is below 5 %, which is definitely a low level compared to the general situation in eastern Germany.

4. Conclusions

Using the examples of three case studies, a specific set of different strategic priorities and approaches with regard to the regeneration of cities has been presented. Whereas Brandenburg an der Havel was characterised by hoping for reindustrialisation for a long time, the city of Görlitz relies essentially on culture as a driving force of urban development, and Greifswald recurs to its traditions as a university city. Between the three case study cities there are important differences of urban development policy in respect of:

- the time of opening up towards strategies of new, postindustrial development options in the fields of education, culture and tourism. In Brandenburg an der Havel, due to old industrial elites being an obstacle, this occurred only after a massive time-lag. This way regeneration processes were delayed in the 1990s;
- the power balance of "industrialist-" and "post-industrialist-" oriented actors regarding urban development policy. Whereas in Görlitz, after the failure of its application to become European Capital of Culture, conflicts arose between representatives of these two development options, in Brandenburg an der Havel in the 1990s postindustrial strategic approaches

in urban planning were initially defeated by the predominance of old industrial elites. However, in the past few years such approaches have clearly gained significance.

- The possibility of taking up paths from earlier phases of historic development. Whereas in Brandenburg an der Havel a new self-image as a university city had to develop gradually, Greifswald was able to build on its centuries-old tradition as a university city. Today the university is an important factor for the regeneration of the city. Görlitz, on the other hand, can look back to its tradition as a “pensionopolis”, by encouraging old-age people to move to the city.

However, the above-sketched case studies do not allow any generalisable statements on regeneration processes in eastern German medium-sized towns. Nevertheless, they provide important indications that demographic and economic structural change does not necessarily mean that a city is doomed but that its fate may be influenced to a certain degree by urban-political action. Our experiences with a number of other eastern German medium-sized towns (Kühn and Liebmann 2009) allow the following conclusions:

- (1) In these cities, urban development policy usually reacted with a considerable delay of several years to ongoing shrinking processes and structural change. What triggered off the development of new strategies of urban development policy was most of all the fact that problems of shrinking developed into crises: lasting failures with reestablishing industry and trade, a high degree of unemployment and the ongoing emigration of inhabitants, as well as increasing financial bottlenecks for the municipalities. I.e. one became aware that problems were developing into crises, and this resulted in a new way of discussing and dealing with problems. This proved to be a significant factor for the development of new ways of thinking and new orientations, which generated new ideas and approaches for future urban development.
- (2) A particular degree of persistence in the context of urban-political behaviour as well as not giving up the hope for reindustrialisation are two factors which are observed most of all in former industrial cities where there was no elite change after unification and the political sea change in Germany in 1990. As a consequence, distinct incongruences could be discerned between structural development on the one hand, characterised by shrinking and deindustrialisation, and the acting of urban development policy, on the other hand, which was still mostly oriented at attracting potential investors. This way of acting is, among others, explained by showing consideration for existing working-class milieus which, however, are often not sufficiently qualified for a services and knowledge economy. In those cities where a stronger middle-class milieu had survived, the structural and identity break was much weaker.
- (3) The regeneration of shrinking cities is less a quantitative process in the course of which a temporary loss of inhabitants and jobs is followed by a new growth period, but it is rather a process of qualitative change. Regeneration is reflected by slowly balancing the account of those moving away from and to the city as well as the balance of loss and gain of jobs. One might as well call this a healthy “downsizing”. Important demographic sources for a regeneration of cities are education and old-age migrants. Whereas particularly university cities attract educational migrants, other cities with an attractive cultural life and cityscape might become residential centres for senior citizens. However, this also indicates the significance of renovating the building structure of urban cores.

(4) In the course of the past few years, quite a number of medium-sized towns in eastern Germany have succeeded in opening up new ways of urban development policy. In this context, processes of working out regeneration strategies (e.g. in the form of visioning processes) proved to be suitably pioneering. This opened up possibility spaces for the municipalities to define future development prospects, and in many cases it led to a huge pool of ideas for urban development, but also to reconsidering existing potentials. In these cases, often a parallelism of most diverse strategies and ideas can be observed. This is an expression of a process of creating ideas, of searching and orienting, in the course of which at first there is the attempt to avoid processes of selection and one-sided image creation.

Summarising our research experience with medium-sized towns in Eastern Germany so far, we may say that despite similar structural conditions – such as deindustrialisation or being in a peripheral locality – there are clear differences between cities. Starting out from similar starting points, different urban-political strategies are observed. As a consequence, some cities are more successful in coping with structural change than others and are better able to regenerate with regard to demography and economy. Whereas after a time of crisis some municipalities succeed with a “take-off” once again and find their way back to economic prosperity, others remain at a reduced level of population and economic dynamics for a longer period, whereas there are again other municipalities where the shrinking crisis becomes a permanent state.

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Summary: Urban Regeneration – Strategies of Shrinking Cities in Eastern Germany

The article deals with the regeneration processes and strategies of shrinking cities in East Germany. Regeneration is understood as a complex process including demographic, socio-economic and physical dimensions. In the first part of the article the terms “shrinkage” and “regeneration” are discussed and distinguished from other “re”-terms such as reurbanisation, restructuring and revitalisation. The complex approach of regeneration policies is transferred from Great Britain to Germany. The second part presents evidence for a differentiated development of medium-sized towns in eastern Germany during 2000 and 2010. In the third part, we present the idea that strategies of urban policy and planning are able to influence regeneration processes. This

hypothesis will be evaluated by the examples of three cities with different regeneration approaches: Brandenburg an der Havel (Brandenburg), Görlitz (Saxony) and Greifswald (Mecklenburg-West Pomerania). Finally we will draw some conclusions on urban development policy from the comparison of differences and communalities between the three cities. Conclusions refer to the perception of shrinkage crises, the delayed role of old industry elites, historical path dependencies and the role of universities and colleges for the regeneration of cities.

Zusammenfassung: Urbane Regenerierung – Strategien schrumpfender Städte in Ostdeutschland

Der Beitrag beschäftigt sich mit demografischen, sozioökonomischen und städtebaulichen Erneuerungsprozessen und -strategien in schrumpfenden Städten Ostdeutschlands, die unter dem Begriff der „Regenerierung“ gefasst werden. Im ersten Kapitel werden die begrifflichen Grundlagen von „Schrumpfung“ und „Regenerierung“ dargestellt und diskutiert. Regenerierung wird aus dem angelsächsischen Kontext auf die Problematik schrumpfender Städte in Ostdeutschland übertragen. Durch seine Komplexität grenzt sich der Begriff von anderen „Re“-Begriffen wie Reurbanisierung, Revitalisierung und Restrukturierung ab. Im zweiten Kapitel werden Befunde vorgestellt, die auf eine Ausdifferenzierung zwischen den Mittel- und Großstädten in Ostdeutschland im Zeitraum 2000 bis 2010 hindeuten. Daraus wird im dritten Kapitel die Untersuchung von Handlungsansätzen der Stadtentwicklungspolitik abgeleitet. Ausgangsthese ist hierbei, dass Strategien der Stadtpolitik einen Einfluss auf die strukturellen Prozesse der Schrumpfung und Regenerierung haben. Diese These wird qualitativ anhand von drei Mittelstädten untersucht: Brandenburg an der Havel (Brandenburg), Görlitz (Sachsen) und Greifswald (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern). Aus dem Vergleich von Differenzen und Gemeinsamkeiten der drei Fallstudien werden Schlussfolgerungen für die Stadtentwicklungspolitik gezogen. Diese beziehen sich auf die Wahrnehmung von Schrumpfungskrisen, die bremsende Rolle von alten Industrieeliten in deindustrialisierten Städten, historischen Pfadentwicklungen sowie die besondere Rolle von Hochschulen für die Regenerierung der Städte.

Résumé: Régénération urbaine – stratégies des villes en déclin en Allemagne de l'Est

Cet article a pour sujet les processus et les stratégies de renouvellement démographique, socio-économique et urbain, désignés par le terme de « régénération », dans les villes en déclin de l'Allemagne de l'Est. Dans la première part, les termes de « déclin » voire « rétrécissement » et de « régénération » sont présentés et discutés. La régénération est transférée du contexte anglo-saxon au problème du rétrécissement des villes en Allemagne de l'Est. En raison de sa complexité, ce terme se distingue des autres concepts en « re » tels que réurbanisation, revitalisation et restructuration. La deuxième part présente des conclusions révélant une importante différenciation entre les villes moyennes et les grandes villes en Allemagne de l'Est entre 2000 et 2010. De là, la troisième part conclut à l'analyse des approches de la politique de développement urbain. Ici, la thèse fondamentale soutient que les stratégies de politique urbaine exercent une influence sur les processus structurels du rétrécissement et de la régénération. Cette thèse est examinée de manière qualitative sur la base de trois villes moyennes: Brandenburg an der

Havel (dans le Land de Brandenburg), Görlitz (Saxe) et Greifswald (Mecklembourg-Poméranie Occidentale). La comparaison des différences entre ces trois études de cas et de leurs points communs permet d'en tirer des conclusions pour la politique de développement urbain. Celles-ci concernent la perception des crises de rétrécissement, le rôle freinant des anciennes élites dans les villes désindustrialisées, les rapports historiques ainsi que le rôle particulier des universités dans la régénération des villes.

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