



**Universität für Bodenkultur Wien
University of Natural Resources
and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna**

**Department für Raum, Landschaft
und Infrastruktur
Department of Spatial-, Landscape-
and Infrastructure- Sciences**

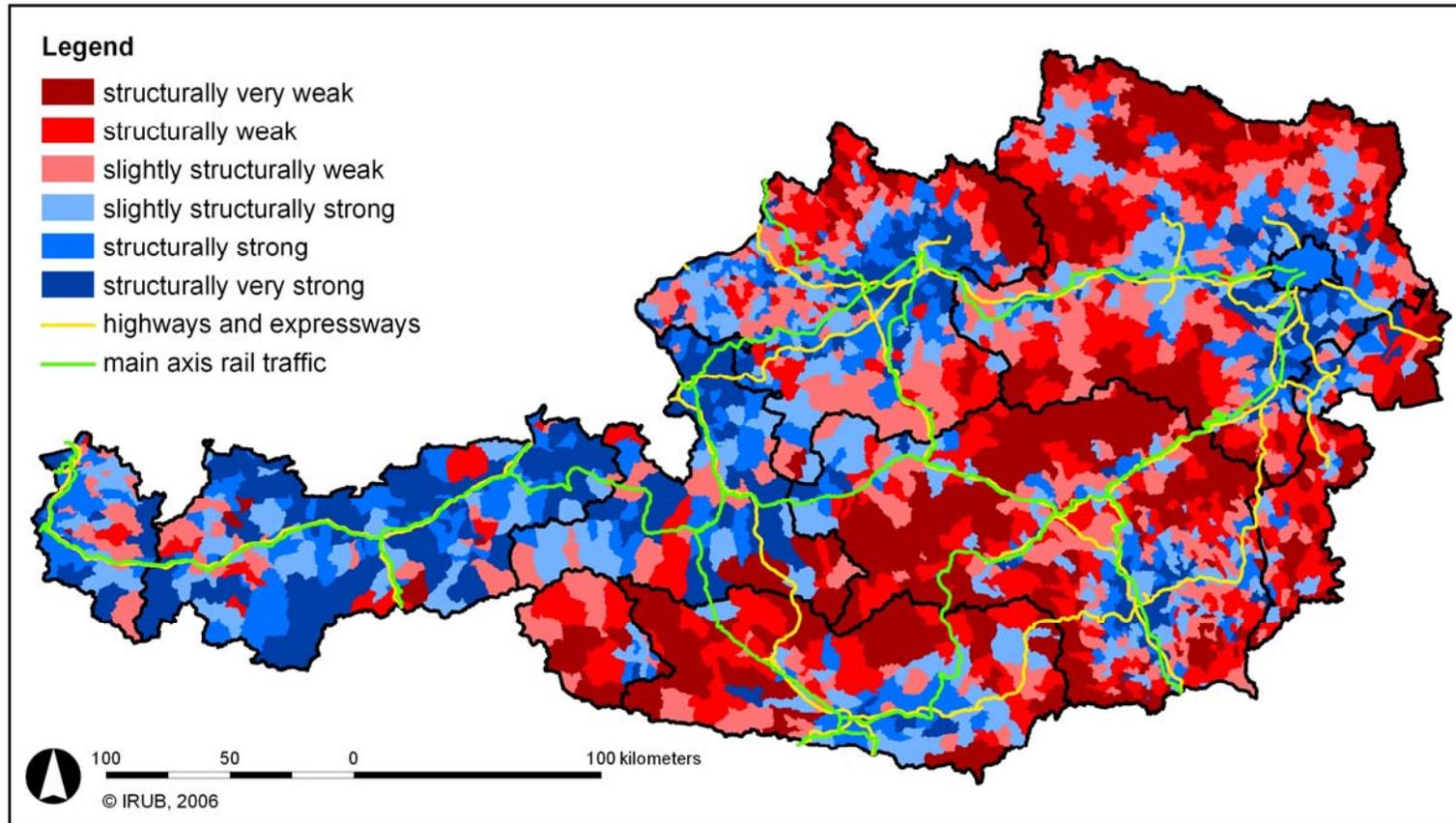
Institute of Spatial Planning and
Rural Development

Shrinkage as Mission for Spatial Planning?

Designed Withdrawal as a new Task for Spatial Planning

Gerlind Weber

Spatial distribution of structurally weak and structurally strong municipalities in Austria 2001



Indicators:

population development, number of women in employment, number of employees, employees in agriculture and forestry, outbound commuters with more than 45 minutes of commuting time, ratio of non-commuters, number of overnight stays, tax revenue per capita

The Reel of Unfavorable Developments



Shrinkage

- continuing loss of jobs
- steady population decline (continuous emigration, high mortality rate, low birth rate)
- relative decline of economic performance in regions
- high number of outbound commuters
- high rate of abandoned residential buildings, plants and stores
- under-use of technical infrastructure
- private households suffer a loss of purchasing power
- diminished financial power of public authorities



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Shrinkage

- physical reduction in density
- functional segregation
- social erosion

initial hypothesis of a survey:

- shrinkage is perceived but not embraced by spatial planning
- despite continuing processes of shrinkage spatial planning focuses on growth strategies
- no active designing and accompanying of shrinkage



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Schrumpfung – die Achillesferse der (Raum)Planung

G. WEBER, J. SCHMID, K. M. HÖFERL, G. STÖGLEHNER, M. KRAMMER, V. PEER



Im Auftrag des Club of Vienna (COV)
Wien 2008



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3 Workpackages of the Survey

- the phenomenon of shrinkage in planning theories and overall concepts of spatial planning (more than 80 theories and 25 mission statements)
- the phenomenon of shrinkage in spatial planning policy and practice
- the key points of a shrinkage oriented spatial planning system



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Analysis of the Theories Resulted in:

- theories based on economic sciences
- error in reasoning: the discussions are based on borderless systems
- no limits to growth
- shrinkage is viewed as a failure of the system
- overcoming the disorders



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Analysis of the Empirical Investigation Resulted in:

(Investigation of 6 rural communities and 1 micro-region)

Downward trend of key indicators for decades:

- awareness of the „general decline of development“
- designing processes of shrinkage is not an issue
- alternatives to the dictate of growth are not identified
- options of „stabilization“ or „organized withdrawal“ are excluded from the start

Conclusion:

- shrinkage is associated with „failure“
- growth strategies are focused on
- the targets of growth are not reached
- „stabilization“ or „complete organized withdrawal“ are not taken into account
- no arrangement for further declining trends
- a re-evaluation of shrinking processes is necessary:
 - Evolutionary Cognitive Science (R. Riedl)
 - Overall Concept of Sustainable Development



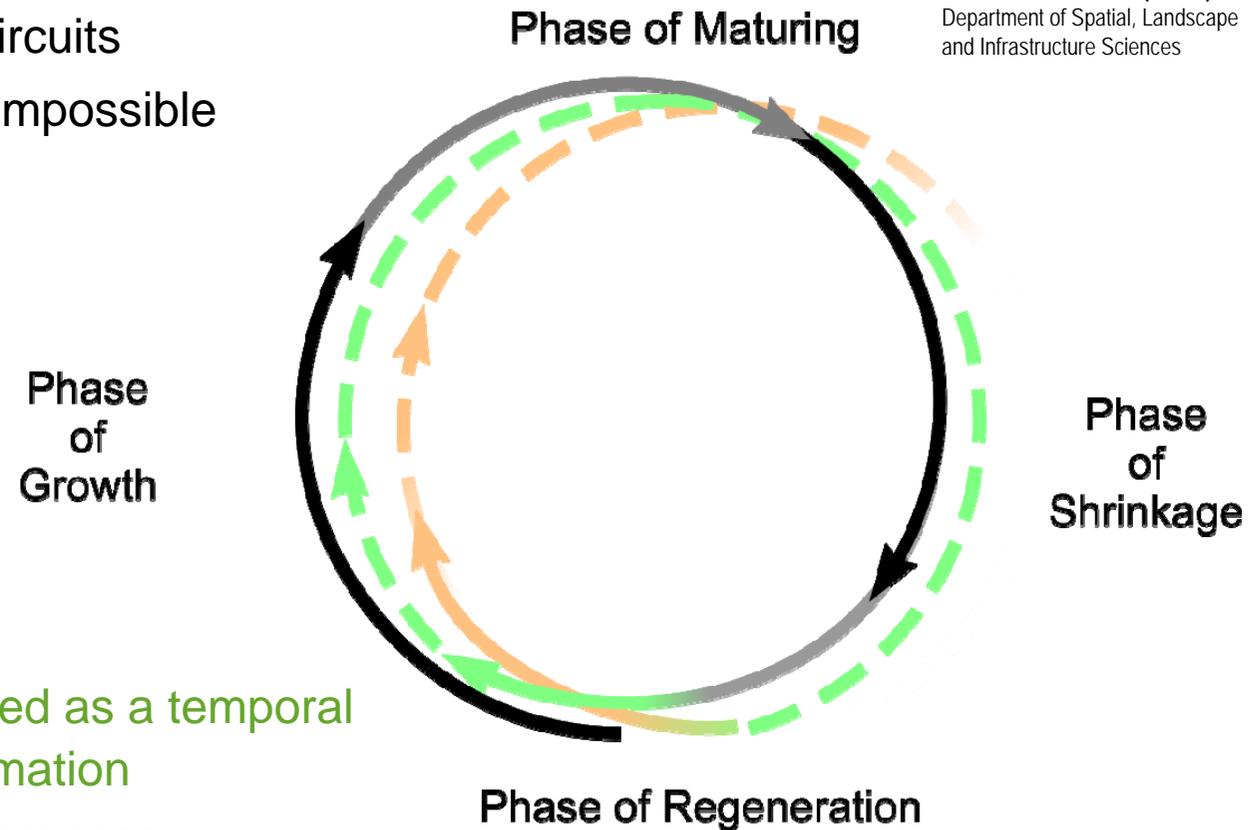
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Re-evaluation of Shrinkage

1. Evolutionary Cognitive Science I (R. Riedl)

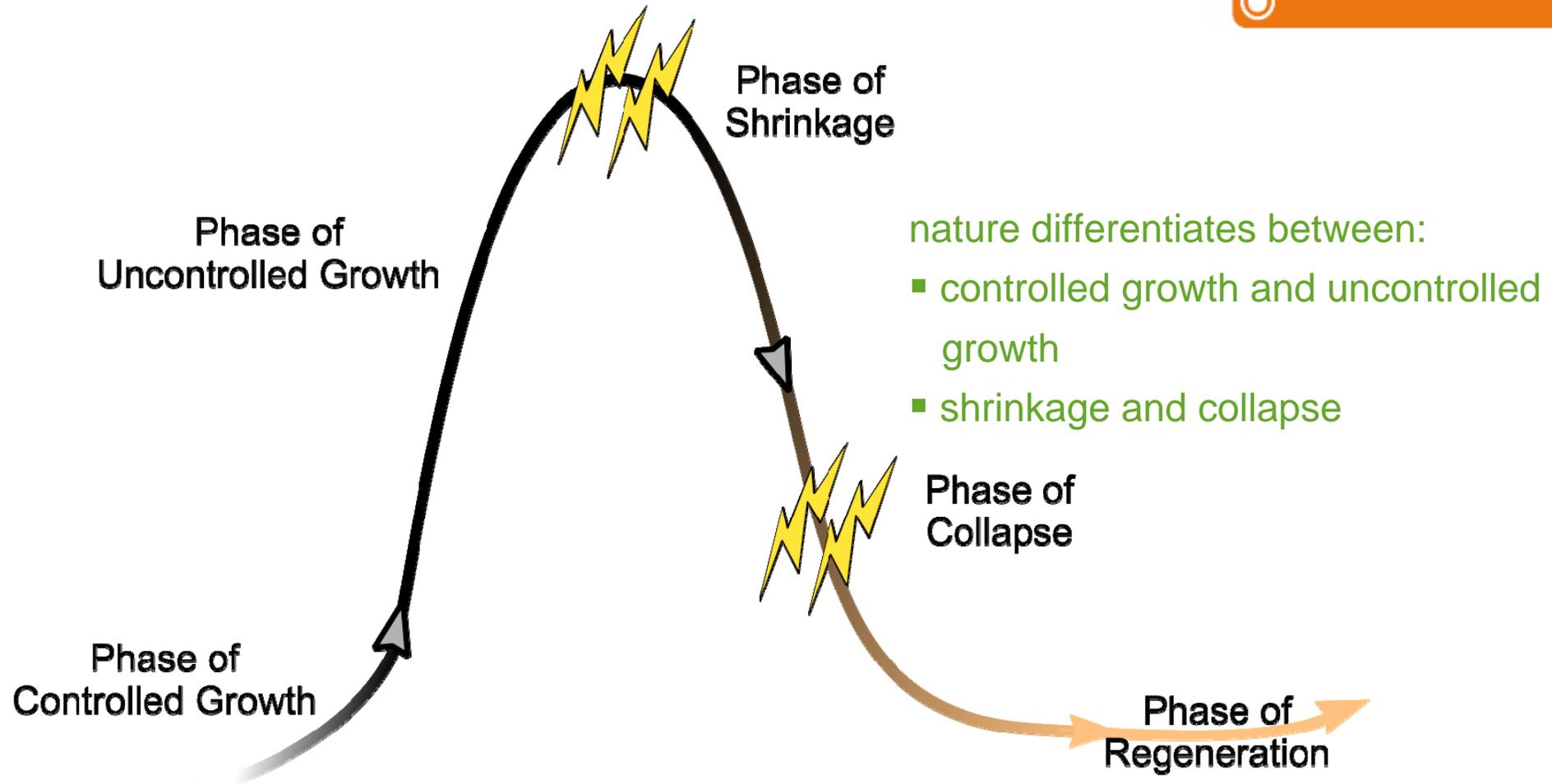
- nature is a finite system
- development in circuits
- infinite growth is impossible

- growth is designed as a temporal process of transformation
- it is a controlled process



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1. Evolutionary Cognitive Science II (R. Riedl)





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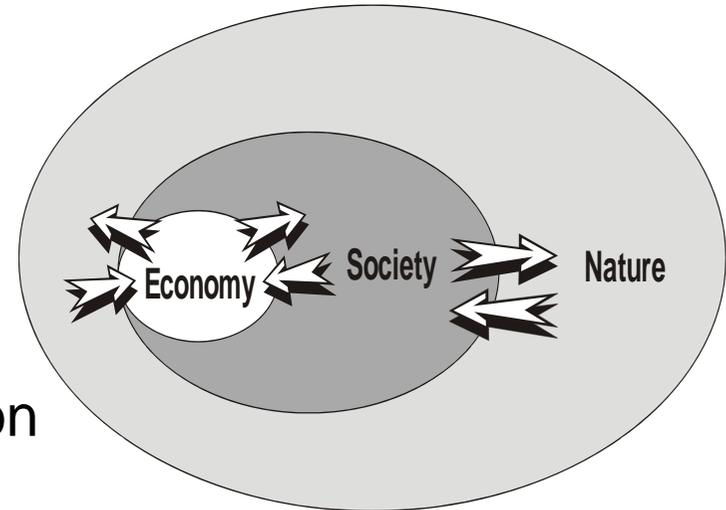
Conclusion:

- permanent growth is a legend
- growth and shrinkage ist to be kept under control
- shrinkage too is to be designed
- spatial planning has to work on processes of growth and shrinkage in parallel

Re-Evaluation of Shrinkage

2. Overall Concept of Sustainable Development

- integrative perspective
- shrinkage has to be controlled and designed
- fundamental value: dematerialisation
 - sufficiency
 - efficiency
- sustainable development removes the taboo and the stigmata of „shrinkage“



Corner Points of Spatial Planning focused on Shrinkage

How can spatial planning successfully control and design shrinking processes?

■ Developing Visions for Shrinking Regions

„Peace for the Landscapes“ (ENGLER, 2004)

- area for relaxation and regeneration
- no intention to adjust to growing regions
- reinterpretation of the regional quality of life: peace, slowness, self-sufficiency
- regional economic relations
- cost-efficiency

Corner Points of Spatial Planning focused on Shrinkage



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■ Safeguarding Supply

- bundling (multifunctional local supply)
- disentangling (development of regional power supply systems)
- making more flexible (mobile service supplier)
- enforcing thrifty, innovative technologies (low-energy houses)

Corner Points of Spatial Planning focused on Shrinkage



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- **Downsizing of Overcapacities**
 - buildings:
 - no more green-field development
 - redesign of built-up areas
 - demolition of excess building capacity

 - infrastructure facilities:
 - scaling down
 - centralizing
 - de-centralizing
 - substituting of facilities (BBR, 2005)

Corner Points of Spatial Planning focused on Shrinkage



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■ Modification and Expansion of Instruments

- breaking down „the principle of protecting existing built structures“
- developing „plans for inward development“

■ Expansion of Role Perception

Spatial planning has to take the role of a

- communicator
- mediator
- moderator

Corner Points of Spatial Planning focused on Shrinkage



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■ Adequate Funding

- enforcing investments in projects of consolidation and “organized withdrawal“
- financing further education, negotiation processes, conversion and withdrawal projects, remediation, improvement of the quality of life

■ Building Bridges to Strategic Issues

- the current financial and economic crisis
- climate protection
- supply of regenerating energy and resources
- demographic change
- alternative transport policy
- ...



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„Accomplishing a control of shrinkage is considerably more complicated and politically more challenging than the control of growth.“

MÜLLER, 2003



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Thank You for listening!

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Department of Spatial-, Landscape- and Infrastructure Sciences
Institute of Spatial Planning and Rural Development (IRUB)
O.Univ.-Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr. Gerlind Weber

Peter Jordanstr. 82, 1190 Vienna
Tel.: +43 1 47654 - 5352, Fax: +43 1 47654 - 5353
gerlind.weber@boku.ac.at
<http://www.rali.boku.ac.at/irub.html>