

# Nothing but Growth for Shrinking Cities?

## Development and Planning Ideas in Poland illustrated by the Old Industrial Cities of Ruda Śląska and Wałbrzych

**Bettina Knoop**

University of Passau  
Chair of Human Geography



# CONTENTS

## **I Theoretical and Regional Framework**

(1) Shrinking Cities and Planning

(2) Poland: Urban Development and Planning

## **II Empirical Research and Results**

(3) Methodology

(4) Ruda Śląska

(5) Wałbrzych

# **I THEORETICAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORK**

# WHAT IS A “SHRINKING CITY“?

- Diverging terminology:

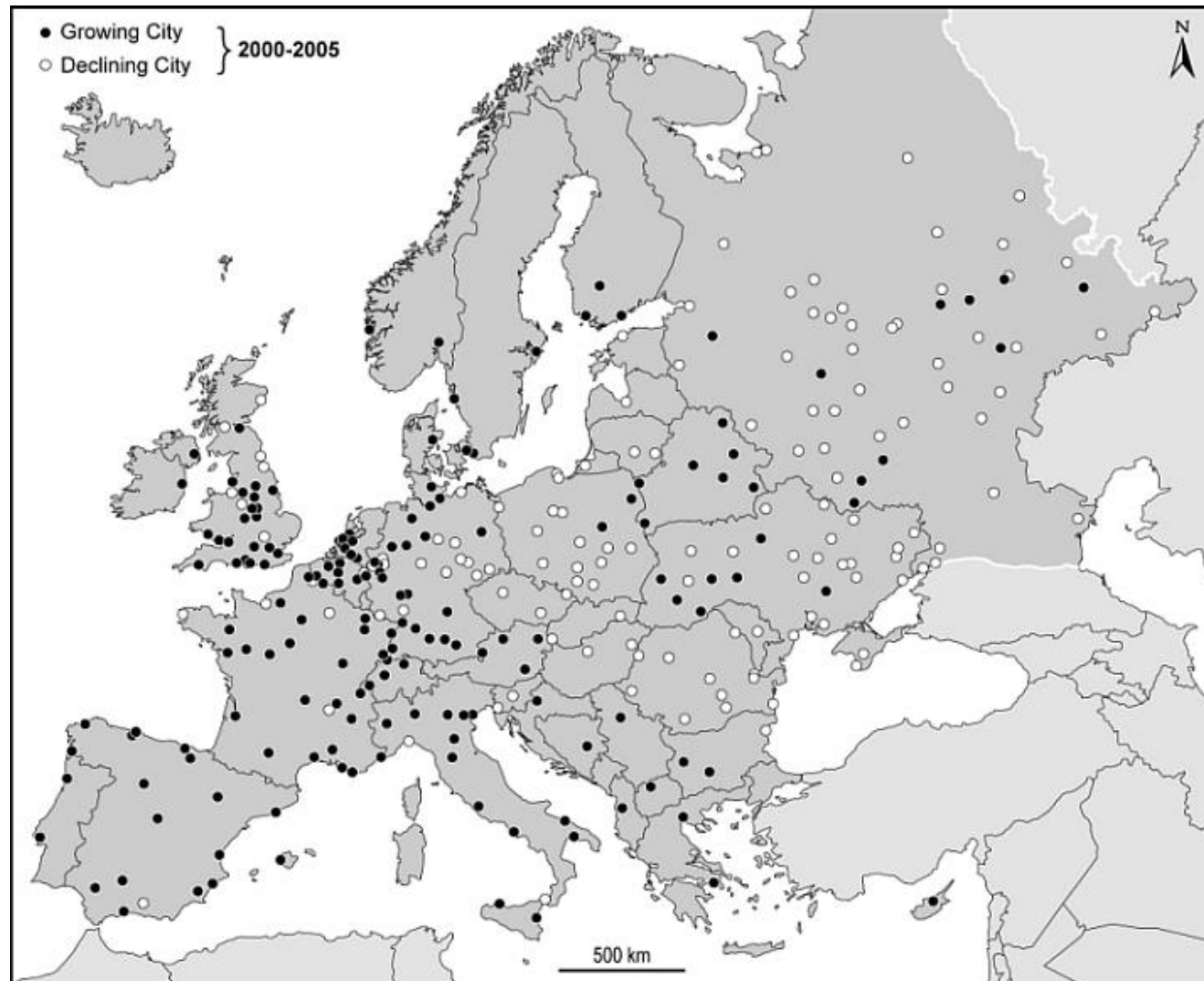
Urban Shrinkage; Urban Decline

Right-Sizing Cities; Shrinking Cities

*...Degrowing Cities?*

- Diverging definitions of urban shrinkage:
  - Multidimensional process connected with every aspect of urban life (ERDMANN 2014)
  - Solely population development (SCHATZ 2010)

# CURRENT SITUATION



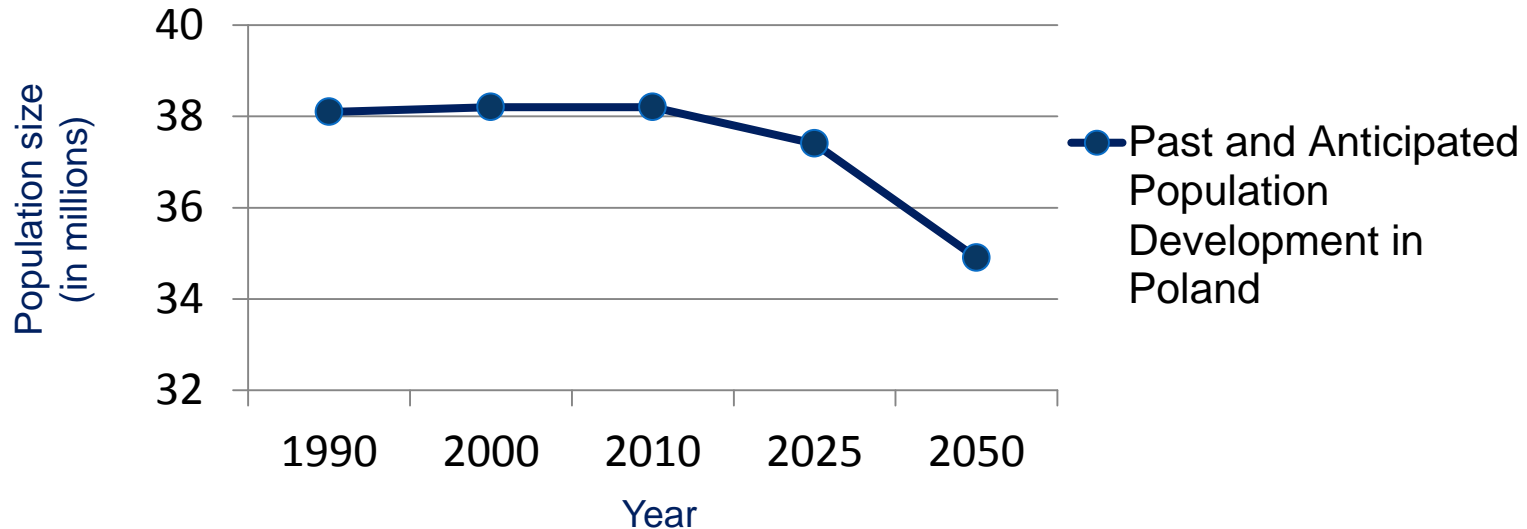
TUROK, MYKHENKO (2006)

## (2) Poland: Urban Development and Planning

# (POST-)SOCIALIST (DE-)INDUSTRIALIZATION

- **Industrialization** as cornerstone of **socialist progress**
- Heavy industry
- **After 1989**: transformation to market economy with neoliberal shock therapy
- Positive economic developments based on **service economy**
- **Deep crisis in steel and mining sector**

# DEMOGRAPHY



Source: Own diagram according to WORLD BANK (2014); ZAHLEN UND DATEN AKTUELL: BEVÖLKERUNG (2013)

- *“Half of the municipalities in Poland are losing Population.”* (OECD 2011)
- *“shock of urban shrinkage”* (CIESIOLKA et al. 2012, 80)



# SPATIAL AND URBAN PLANNING

- Limited capacity for action at local level
- Lack of nationwide urban planning direction  
(ERDMANN 2014)
- Share of planned municipal areas: 25%  
(nationwide average in 2008) → fosters  
uncontrolled, economy-driven developments  
(ERDMANN 2014)

## **II EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND RESULTS**

# RESEARCH QUESTIONS

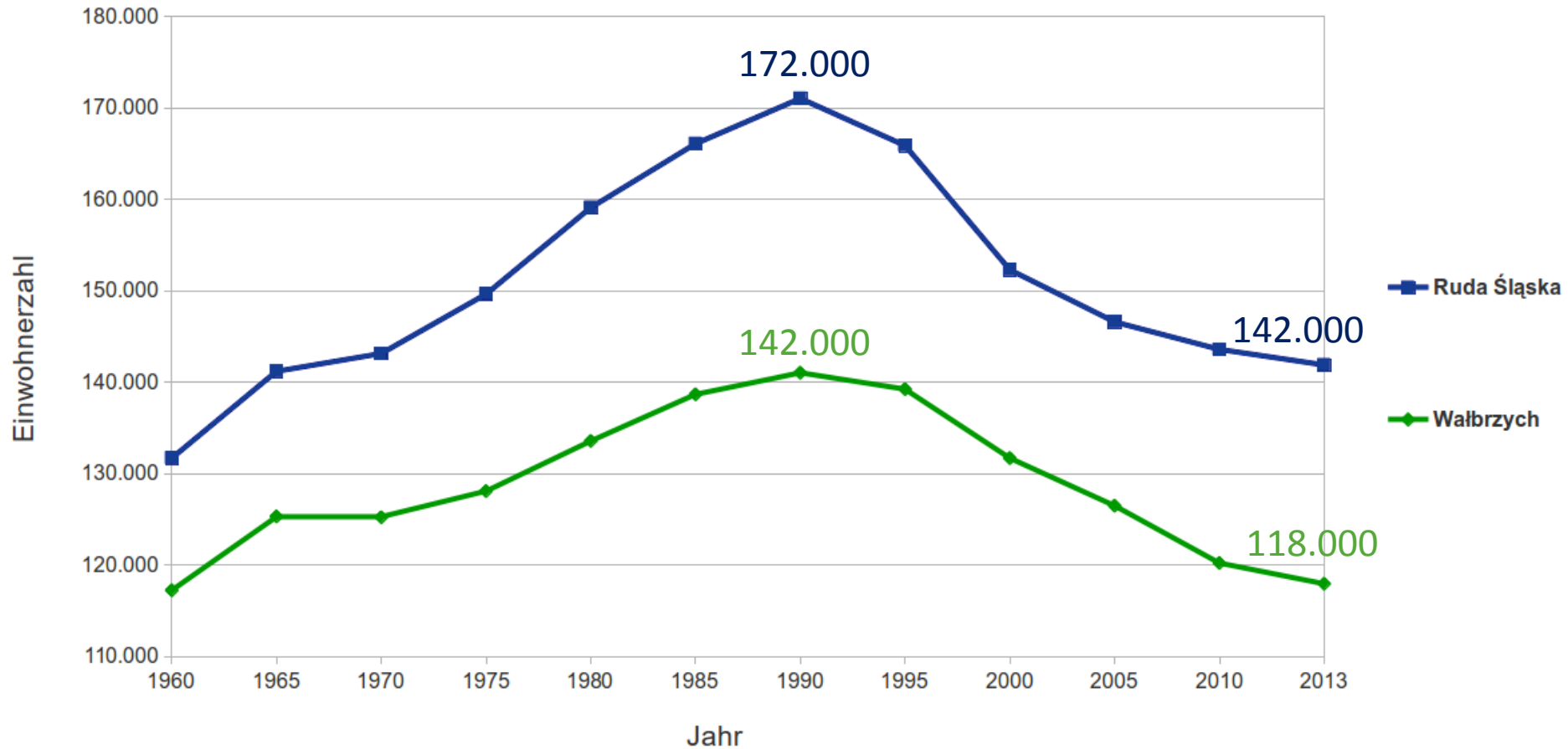
- (1) How are urban shrinking processes being perceived and evaluated by local decision-makers?
- (2) What are responses to the shrinkage?
- (3) What attitude do local decision-makers have towards the possibilities of ***planning with the shrinkage?***

# Location of Ruda Śląska and Wałbrzych



Source: Own map, designed with STEPMAP (2014)

# Population Development in Ruda Śląska and Wałbrzych



Source: Own diagram based on BDL (2014)

# RUDA ŚLĄSKA



Source: Own photograph (2014)

## Location of Ruda Śląska within the Katowice Conurbation



Source: Pawel Grzywocz (2007); Licence: GNU Free Documentation License; own marking

# STRENGTH FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LOCAL DECISION-MAKERS

*“In Ruda Śląska we have a problem with the strength. Because weaknesses, I know, we have, but strength...” (RZ)*

- Location and transport infrastructure
- Vacant land for investments
- Spatial development plan for entire city area → simplifies realization of investments
- Experienced industrial workforce

**→ Focus on economy**



# WEAKNESSES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LOCAL DECISION-MAKERS

- Competition between cities
- Monofunctional economic structure
- Environmental degradation
- Scattered cityscape
- Lack of local participation

# PERCEPTION OF THE SHRINKAGE

Questioner: *“Almost every city in the Katowice conurbation is shrinking.”*

RZ: *“Each city?”*

Questioner: *“Yes.”*

RZ: *“I don’t know if Katowice...”*

**→ Lack of sensitization for supraregional demographic and urban developments**

# PERCEPTION OF THE SHRINKAGE

*“sickness”* (GR)

*“depopulation problem”* (RY)

*“I don't believe that in longer term [...] this level of quality of life could be maintained [with a declining population], I don't believe that.”* (MR)

**→ Shrinkage as a threat**

# REACTION TO THE SHRINKAGE

*“If you attract more people to invest here, the town will have more money [...]. For investment and for new ideas and for new things. So we need to attract people [...] because everyone works [for] a better life here.” (DR)*

# REACTION TO THE SHRINKAGE

*“European Union says we have to cooperate, and this is good for us. [...] We don’t receive money from national government, so we have to focus on European.”* (RZ)

**→ Focus on quantitative growth and exogenous resources**

# PLANNING WITH THE SHRINKAGE?

*“They [western industrial cities] were dealing with it [deindustrialization and its consequences] a few decades before, we should learn more from those experiences.” (GR)*

# WAŁBRZYCH



Source: Own photograph (2013)

# WEAKNESSES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LOCAL DECISION-MAKERS

- Image:

*“In Poland, I think, every person knows this city. [...] When they hear this name, they know suddenly coal mines, poverty and problems. I think the opinion is much, much worse than the real situation.” (UW)*

- Dilapidated buildings
- Unemployment
- Low level of local participation



# PERCEPTION OF THE SHRINKAGE

*“There are not very many empty flats, in fact. [...] So rather it’s that you have to wait for a flat, if you have a bad situation.” (UW)*

**→ Certain ignorance, but more profound understanding than in Ruda Śląska**

**→ Shrinkage as a threat**

# Revitalization of the old coal mine „Stara Kopalnia“



Own Photographs (2013)

*“The target here is to attract 150.000 people. Per year. And Wałbrzych is only 90.000 people, so this is not the target group, because everyone will come once, and that's it. And I have to fill it longer than a year.” (BW)*

# CONCLUSION

## Perceptions

- Lack of supraregional (demographic) contextualization of urban shrinkage
- Urban growth is possible if the cities try hard enough

## Planning Framework

- Limited capacity for action → reactionary planning

→ *External resources to achieve goals of quantitative urban growth*

→ *Necessity and possibilities of planning with the shrinkage are not being perceived*

***Growth →***  
***Response of Planning to Urban***  
***Shrinkage***

***Thank You for Your Attention.***

# SELECTED REFERENCES

- CIESIOLKA, Przemyslaw, Tadeusz STRYJAKIEWICZ und Emilia JAROSZEWSKA (2012): Shrinkage and the Post-Socialist Transformation: The case of Walbrzych (Poland). In: Demographic Change and Local Development. Hrsg. von Cristina Martinez-Fernandez, Naoko Kubo, Antonella Noya und Tamara Weyman, 79–84.
- ERDMANN, Anja (2014): Städtische Transformationsprozesse in Mittel- und Osteuropa: Stadtentwicklung zwischen Wachstum und Schrumpfung am Beispiel von Łódź und Gdansk. Wiesbaden.
- HAASE, Annegret (2011): Schrumpfung als Herausforderung für polnische Großstädte. In: Polen-Analysen( 104), 2–10. url: [www.laender-analysen.de/polen/pdf/PolenAnalysen104-pdf](http://www.laender-analysen.de/polen/pdf/PolenAnalysen104-pdf) (date 20. 08. 2013).
- HOLLANDER, Justin B., Karina PALLAGST, Terry SCHWARZ und Frank J. POPPER (2009): Planning Shrinking Cities. Medford und MA. url: [policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/popper/ShrinkingCities.pdf](http://policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/popper/ShrinkingCities.pdf) (date 03. 03. 2014).
- SCHATZ, Laura Katherine (2010): What helps or hinders the adoption of good planning principles in shrinking cities? A comparison of recent planning exercises in Sudbury, Ontario and Youngstown, Ohio. Diss. Waterloo und Ontario: University of Waterloo.url: [https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/bitstream/handle/10012/5199/Schatz\\_Laura.pdf?sequence=1](https://uwspace.uwaterloo.ca/bitstream/handle/10012/5199/Schatz_Laura.pdf?sequence=1) (date 08. 05. 2014).
- TUROK, Ivan und Vlad MYKHENKO (2007): The trajectories of European cities, 1960–2005. In: Cities 24(3), 165–182.

# CONTACT

**Bettina Knoop**

Scientific Assistant

University of Passau  
Chair of Human Geography

Tel: +49 (0)851/509-2736

Email: [bettina.knoop@uni-passau.de](mailto:bettina.knoop@uni-passau.de)