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Newsletter for Social Science-Based Spatial Research

Urban Transformations

Shrinkage and Growth – Dynamics of Urban Transformation

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Major Projects or Bottom Up – Methods of Regeneration

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Urban transformations and regeneration in an international context

One of the most striking – and most pressing – issues concerning the globalised world is urban transformation, which can manifest itself in many different ways, depending on the location. In global terms, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of people living in an urban environment in relation to the total population. Some cities are bursting at the seams, whereas in other regions a process of continuous shrinkage can be observed. One issue that social science-based urban research will have to deal with in the future is how cities intend to handle this transformation, how cities might be able to regenerate and adapt to this transformation by preparing themselves for global developments on different operating levels.

Urban transformation, which has advanced dramatically since the mid 1980s due to the quickening pace of globalisation, is both a major and future-oriented topic. In 2014, more than half of the entire global population was already living in cities; the UN estimates that, by 2050, two thirds of the global population will be urbanites.

The degree of urbanisation, i.e. the percentage of urbanites in relation to the entire population, varies. At more than 73 percent, it is highest in global

terms in North America, Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe; it is lowest in Africa and Asia. On these continents, on the other hand, urban growth is rapid. With globalisation, the relationship between the cities changed across the globe, new global urban hierarchies developed; global cities became the fixed stars of the new order. At the same time, new players – gigantic megacities, particularly from economically prosperous emerging countries – came on the scene. The cities had to readjust their position in both

a national and international context; the ratio of rural areas to urban centres changed radically.

The transformation in the cities outside the industrial countries is governed by other urban development planning issues. "In many countries in the developing world, for example in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, urban societies are currently being formed, the population of which are experimenting with highly mobile ways of life and which partially challenge the traditional perceptions

of western urban societies designed for long-term residency," Prof. Felicitas Hillmann, head of the "Regeneration of Cities and Towns and Towns" research department and professor for "Transformation of urban areas in an international context" at the TU Berlin explains. Urban growth takes up the lion's share of the resources available in these countries, such as power and water, and pool capital and people. The price of the rising standard in the rapidly developing cities – mainly patterned on western models – is paid for by those living in rural areas, who then find themselves without any prospects. They continuously migrate to the cities with their better living conditions where they expect to be able to realise their dream of an urban lifestyle. In parts of Africa and Asia massive poverty-stricken areas without any formal access to infrastructure, health care or schools arose. At the same time, gated communities with their own

water and power supply and waste disposal system cut themselves off from the majority society as if it was a perfectly natural thing to do.

Today, the urbanisation patterns of the developing world are more clearly setting the pace in the current debate on global urban development. In light of global crises, such as climate change, the increase in the number of people settling in the urban centres and their need for basic support services is even considered efficient, because it would

seem easier for the people to gain access to health care and schools here. Rapid urban transformation has a different

degree of impact on the various cities and creates its own dynamics with regard to coping strategies, understood here as attempts to adapt and to handle the critical situation in a creative way. Although the size of the cities is important, the context-specific handling of available resources and the ability to be able to explore new paths in practical urban development, thereby developing independent types of resilience is, however, even more crucial.

"The impact of the accelerated flow of people, capital and goods into the cities due to globalisation and neo-liberalisation has only been rudimentarily examined in an international comparison to date", Hillmann says. The concepts for urbanisation, mainly devised in the western world, only help in the current situation to a certain degree towards developing a better understanding of the upheavals and fault lines of globalisation that are already apparent. Planetary urbanisation, a perspective that focuses on and compares the glo-

bal patterns of urbanisation, is taken up at this point and discusses, for example, processes of glocalisation, understood

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as the simultaneousness of local and global dynamics at one location. Such a globally comparative analysis presents totally different questions than before. Is that which was analysed as a process of gentrification in the past decades in the Global North not just simply the spatial manifestation of a globally evolving middle class? Or: What influence does the dramatically advanced digitalisation with its algorithms have on people's settlement systems? Are the environmental changes in the cities being provoked by the climate change and are these the consequences of the ruthless (mis)use of resources? Are new regional formations evolving that create new planning structures due to their connection with the diaspora?

"Fragmenting urban development patterns with their synchrony of wealth and poverty in the smallest of spaces that was still typical for the so-called developing countries well into the 1990s can also be observed in the cities of industrialised countries, penetrating previous development trajectories", as Hillmann describes the current developmental tendency of European and North American cities. "Marginalisation and disconnection have asserted themselves in some areas of Europe and North America as consistent elements of already existing peripheralisation tendencies; socio-spatial disparities have tended to grow more acute." The focus of urban development practices in the cities of the global north is also shifting more and more to the informal practices of urban development as lived by the urbanites in the global south. Moreover, the social stratifications would appear to be stable across

all cities and tend to exhibit horizontal permeability and mobility (between the population of a similar stratification in various urban districts) rather than vertical permeability and mobility (status mobility within the city).

To put it more precisely you could also say, according to Hillmann: While the focus of urban development in the so-called developing world is on setting up an infrastructure to cope with the rapid urbanisation and creating sustainable social systems, the question being asked in North America, Europe and Japan is how to deal intelligently with parts of cities that are both shrinking and growing at the same time from a planning point of view. How can the centrifugal developments triggered by globalisation be integrated within the cities – such as in the case of the economic "redundancies" caused by the discontinuation of industrial mass production? What influence do globalised services (for example, IT related services or care services) have on the urban structure? How can cities use control options aimed at totally different levels of players and action to make them remain liveable for their entire population?

The comparison with industrialisation – once described by Polanyi as a "great transformation" – can be applied to the transformation of the cities in western industrialised societies in the course of globalisation. Back then, the quickly growing cities also looked for ways to cope with current problems, particularly with the virulent social issue. This was a manifestation of the rapid social upheaval that was intensified in the cities. The cities applied their regeneration policies in response to the various dimensions of urban transformation. First of all, they reacted to the construction requirements by reorganising the urban infra(structure) (expansion of transport, traffic and basic support services); secondly, they reacted to the imminent drastic change in the socioeconomic structure (social security, educational institutions).

Thirdly, the representation of the cities changed as reflected in the shifting of images and symbols and in the drafting of new principles (cleaning up the city, decentralised city). The changed mobility patterns of capital, manpower and knowledge that were an expression of the new integration in international circuits (immigrant neighbourhoods, internationalisation) formed a fourth dimension of the transformation. All regeneration practices react to these four dimensions of urban transformation just as much today as they did in the past. The term "regeneration" suggests that the town is something natural, something that is able to regenerate, something alive.

The term was first used in Great Britain in the period immediately after the war. In those days, the term "regeneration" was used only in connection with (re-) construction measures. This included, in particular, tearing down inner-city areas with their old buildings, building new council housing for people living in poverty on the outskirts and designing green belts. In the US, the regeneration policy in the 1960s was soon secretly referred to as "negro removal" because the people from the more vulnerable sections of society – often Afro-American – were pushed back to the outskirts. In the early 1980s the new concepts of urban regeneration came to Europe from the US. They imported a stronger internationally competitive orientation among the cities and accen-

tuated the importance of the location, but not the entire city with its entire population. How were regeneration practices designed in the European cities with the onset of globalisation and the unleashed liberalisation of the world market?

In the late 1980s the first European urban development programmes such as "URBAN, Urban Pilot Projects" or the "European Capitals of Culture" initiative were starting to take shape in Europe, establishing an important starting point for urban development measures. All European cities were faced with the challenge of coping with the critical transition to a vaguely outlined post-industrial society within the cities themselves and, at the same time, finding their place within the developing European urban system. Europe's cities were becoming networked.

This time, too, the reorganisation of the physical urban structure, which was, with a neo-liberal rationale, mainly expedited through major projects and infrastructure measures, was one of the key negotiation arenas of the new urban development policy. The migration architecture that dealt with the various forms of mobility (car, train, boat) was developed and new functions added. "Because it formed an umbilical cord to the rest of the world and even made the city interesting in terms of competition among international locations", Hillmann expounds.

Many cities combined this reorganisation of the infrastructure with an extensive regeneration of its historical city centres and the basic structure of its buildings. Present-day examples of this reorganisation are cruise line terminals, which make use of existing migration infrastructure and are being expanded and developed for the affluent society, and also major projects such as Stuttgart 21. In many cases, these construction projects meet the requirements of a joint European planning process with long-negotiated corridors and territorial interests.

The second negotiation arena, which formed the starting point of the regeneration practices, referred to the altered basic urban socio-economic principles that had an influence on how people lived, worked and survived in the city.

The "urban crisis" since the late 1980s was a manifestation of the general structural crisis and the European question of how the model of a welfare state in the post-war period could still be sustained despite a drop in economic output. Many European cities had withdrawn ground-breaking planning concepts, such as council housing, that gradually lead to a stronger socio-spatial polarisation. This more pronounced separation of the urbanites into "rich and poor", a new "in" and "out", was taken up by urban development policies which made selective offers to specific problematic groups, thus attempting to counteract further tendencies towards devaluation – for example, by means of district management.

"The spatial dimension of discrimination, socio-spatial polarisation, became the focal point of various regeneration policies. In Germany, the expectation was that strong local communities in the various neighbourhoods would strengthen the district per se. The intention of the funding frameworks that were firmly anchored in the social environment was to do justice to a stronger bottom-up oriented policy", Hillmann explains. The unpl-

anned regeneration policies that were brought into the cities by new user groups were also bottom-up. They often adopted old infrastructures and revitalised them for their own purposes – at first temporarily, tenuously and experimentally. "That is why the urban crisis is essentially also a crisis of the changing working environment, which was now demanding innovation, self-optimisation and flexibility and newly defined the risks for each individual. The urban workplaces and the role of work in urban life were re-interpreted as was demonstrated, among other things, by

the increase in tenuous working practices such as employment relationships that were either of a temporary nature or for which employees were not subject to social security contributions", Hillmann states.

Thirdly, the representations also changed this time too; the way in which people saw the city and the way in which the city saw and presented itself. Now each place needed an individual profile, preferably a guiding principle, and was obliged to give reasons why peo-

ple should invest and re-invest in it. Investor-oriented urban development was the brand essence of the neo-liberal urban policies. The now emerging guiding principles of urban development favoured a regeneration practice of "culture-led development". The icons of urban semantics designed by global architectural offices spoke a clear language: "Look at me", they said to the beholder.

Prestigious museums, universities and sometimes even public facilities such as libraries were intended to act as cata-

The cities applied their regeneration policies in response to the various dimensions of urban transformation.

lysts for the regeneration process and often enough took precedence over citywide interests. Examples of this culture-led regeneration can be found throughout the whole of Europe: the Guggenheim in Bilbao, the Forum 2000 in Barcelona or the new library in Birmingham. In seaports, urban planners revitalised the fallow land of the displaced ports turning it into a waterfront and made it the starting point of a stronger orientation towards an event culture that was aimed less at the urban population than at visitors who came

from further away. "The combination of these actions together with the ongoing socio-economic differentiation process divided cities throughout Europe into areas that are either gentrified and consumer-oriented or neglected and devalued", Hillmann reports. "It is now becoming apparent", says Hillmann, "that the regeneration of public areas in the European cities could become the next arena for negotiating urban development practices". Because this is were the various regeneration requirements of the heterogeneous population groups meet. The features that will characterise urbanity in the future, and what form planning processes based on participation could take in socially and culturally mixed societies, will be negotiated here.

Fourthly, urban transformation also brought a change in mobility patterns. The picture changed yet again with regard to how long and how often people moved to the cities and then moved away again, and how and where the different population groups co-existed. Some European cities are experienced in dealing with migration and are able to quickly take in new migrants and effectively integrate them because they have neighbourhoods in which this has been exhaustively tried and tested and because their administrative organisation is already prepared for dealing with urban diversity. First informal migrant community networks are often formed here which could serve as starting points for more institutionalised regeneration practices. A cosmopolitan academic elite has settled here. In migrant-dominated neighbourhoods you will often find entrepreneurs who not only establish international networks, but are also dependent on a tolerant, multicultural environment. In recent months, the importance of involving Europe in international migration systems has become glaringly apparent to an extent that has never been seen before: many cities have to quickly take in new population groups, accommodate refugees and integrate them in the short and medium term. Not only could this revitalise already fragile constellations of co-existence,

but it could also weaken them even further. In many European cities, social engagement is on the increase due to this external requirement for mobility, filling the planning gaps for the time being.

Urban regeneration, i.e. the attempt by urban planners to influence the organisation of urban co-existence using instruments and measures, originated in the past from the three negotiation arenas specified above. "However the term regeneration also conveys the image of a medicine that promises to heal a sick patient, or at least make him more optimistic, but fails to mention that it is often a case of political intervention with unknown side effects", Hillmann comments. Urban planners were more or less able to specifically influence the expansion and development of the infrastructure, the reorganisation of the supporting socio-economic structure and the alteration of the guiding principles and the symbolic-cultural representation of European cities in both a national and European context. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that urban involvement in international migration and mobility regimes in some cases defies such control.

Migration and migrants act as a spatial power of definition, which, apart from political categories, (must) have an impact on society. However, the cities have to find a mode, regulate it through international exchange and develop visions on how to avoid turning into an island within a compartmentalised Europe and, at the same time, advance a form of urban development that is sustainable due to its participatory approach. How can the blind spots in regeneration practices (concentration on specific user groups and selected, gentrified subareas) that have evolved over the past years be treated constructively?

Research into urban regeneration is unable to offer any instant solutions for the problems of urban transformation listed here. But it can support and guide the planning process – understood here as a reference to all that is to

come in the future – by cautiously and critically analysing all that has gone before. An examination of the measures necessary for adapting to critical situations and for regeneration in an international comparison provides information on greater social trends and helps to classify the urban development processes observed in Germany. In a best case scenario, this analysis can also help in the development of new, regionalised and locally adapted urban development practices with regard to which Germany can look back on many years of experience. ∎

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Gentrification research – redefined

The specialist term "gentrification", which is used scientifically to refer to the "revaluation" of a neighbourhood by crowding out less affluent members of society and welcoming higher-income earners, has found its unprecedented way into everyday speech in Germany over the past five to ten years. Gentrification processes are an essential part of the current urban transformation, almost on the same level as regeneration measures in terms of content. In many cities, gentrification is even discussed as a consequence of previously implemented regeneration measures. However, the fact that the word is now commonly used in everyday language and the fact that theoretical deficits are becoming increasingly evident both make it necessary to substantively develop the gentrification models even further, according to a thesis of a research project being carried out by Dr Matthias Bernt at IRS.

"Gentrification" has long been one of the most fascinating topics of urban research. Since the introduction of the term by the British-German sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964, two basic patterns of explanation for this process have established themselves in particular in the scientific world: "Production-side" explanation approaches base the revaluation of residential areas on the difference between returns on a property that have actually been realised and returns that are potentially possible. This gap is termed the "value gap". If the gap is large enough, an investment in the previously neglected housing is suddenly attractive. The dilapidated dwellings of the past are then renovated and modernised which increases the rent. Low-income earners are no longer able to pay these higher rents

and so they move out over time. High-income earners move in, and so the process of displacement begins. "Consumption-side" explanation approaches tend to see the cause of gentrification processes rooted in social-structural, demographic and cultural processes which subsequently lead to an increase in demand for inner-city housing space. They assume that a revaluation is fuelled by need, i.e. by a situation in which more people with purchasing power are inquiring about specific areas and price categories.

"The basic problem of both approaches is that they are based on the concepts of urban development that were devised in the 1970s and 1980s in light of the developments taking place in American and British cities", says Dr Matthias

Bernt, research associate in the "Regeneration of Cities and Towns" research department. They are strongly influenced by this background experience and largely ignore factors (which can be disregarded in these contexts) such as the political regulation of housing markets. The predominance of these models have also lead to a simplified and universalising image of gentrification processes in the scientific environment, in which there is very little room for the varying structures of housing systems in different countries.

On this basis, revaluation processes that are taking place in various cities such as Berlin, Peking, Bucharest or Rio de Janeiro would be analysed in broad areas of research particularly as modifications of a process that is car-

ried out the same everywhere and not sufficiently described in terms of the local dynamics and restrictions.

This is the starting point for the "Gentrification and housing policy" project, financially supported by a Feodor Lynen research grant from the Alexander-von-Humboldt Foundation, in which Bernt examines and compares gentrification processes from 2014-2016 in London, Berlin and St. Peters-

What effect do different ways of regulating the housing market have on investments in existing housing?

burg. The research focuses on two central questions: What effect do different ways of regulating the housing market have on investments in existing housing? And what effect do different policies have on the displacement of low-income earners?

"The initial results already show a very different picture, which has very little to do with the models discussed in public, on the basis of which pioneers, who discover a residential area, push its revaluation, or according to whom gentrification in capitalist societies is a normal, quasi automatic, process", Bernt explains.

The example set by the London district of Barnsbury clearly demonstrates this differentiated interpretation of the term "gentrification". The district in the north of Britain's capital city is a particularly interesting object of analysis as it has already been dealing with gentrification processes for a long time now, some 50 years. Over this period of time, it is possible to divide the gentrification process into three stages:

In the first stage – in the 1960s and 1970s – the neighbourhood was transformed from a poorly maintained residential area populated mainly by the working class and migrants featuring a high percentage of rented flats and low rents into a neighbourhood largely characterised by private home owners and middle-class households. This process

was described in detail by the British geographers Chris Hamnett and William Randolph and explained in relation to the Value Gap described above. To put it simply, home owners in those days were faced with the situation that the returns that could be realised by renting out property were quite limited due to rental laws that were comparatively social-minded, while at the same time the purchase of owner-occupied properties was aided and abetted by British taxation laws. In light of this, the Value Gap refers to the difference between the income from a rented apartment and the income that could be generated by converting and selling this apartment. The difference between both of these figures was considerable in the 1970s in Barnsbury and this lead to an extensive conversion of the rental housing and a complete change of the population structure within a very short time.

In a second stage, the gentrification process that had already started was

consolidated by the "Right to Buy". This was a statutory right introduced by the Thatcher government that enabled tenants of communal housing to purchase the properties they lived in. In those days, the purchase of this property was facilitated by extremely

high reductions in price. However, this "tenant privatisation" lead to the fact that, over the years, a large portion of the council houses landed on the real estate market, because the previous owners then resold their properties. In Barnsbury, where almost half of all housing was council property in the early 1980s, the lion's share of the council housing was converted in this manner and sold to higher-income households. Where council housing could have formed a sort of "protection zone" for lower-income households, the "Right to Buy" thus enabled gentrification processes to be consolidated and intensified.

"We are currently experiencing a third stage in Barnsbury and other parts of London in which, on the one hand, gentrification is becoming a global portfolio strategy for property owners and, on the other hand, the percentage of tenancies is starting to grow again", Bernt states, based on current research. Today, some 60 percent of properties in London's inner-city districts are being purchased by "non-UK buyers", who are banking on high appreciation potential in particular. This has resulted in an enormous price inflation on the London real estate market. Today's prices are so high that not even high-income earners (for example, professors at renowned universities) can afford to purchase a property in an area like Barnsbury. Due to the revaluation process that continues to spiral upwards in neighbourhoods that

were already gentrified decades ago, British researchers such as Tim Butler and Loretta Lee even refer to this as a "super gentrification", in which traditional gentrifiers are ousted by more affluent households. At the same time, renting out property is starting to become attractive for investors again. Responsible for this, as well as many other reasons, is the complete deregulation of rental laws – since the late 1980s existing rental agreements can

25 years in succession after the start of the transformation, the rich and poor in most Russian cities still live very close to each other, usually in the same house.

"On the one hand, parallels can be drawn between London, Berlin and St. Petersburg, for example in the dynamics of investment procedures or in the development of the population structure", Bernt summarises.

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What effect do different policies have on the displacement of low-income earners?

be terminated by landlords without cause with a period of notice of two months. This weakens the tenant's position and, at the same time, makes it easy for the landlord to increase the rent. "All in all, this results in a situation where property owners purchase very expensive properties and are able to wait until these become even more expensive – and, at the same time, can easily cover the costs incurred in the meantime with the rental income and are able to evict the tenants at any time", Bernt concludes.

There is no equivalent situation in Berlin and St. Petersburg. In summary, it can be said that gentrification in Berlin takes place primarily within rental housing sectors where tenants have extensive rights. Add to this a multitude of local policies which affect the housing market in various ways. Consequently, housing that is affordable also for low-income earners will still be available even in largely gentrified residential areas for a long time to come.

In Russia, on the other hand, the privatisation that took place in the 1990s has lead to the evolution of a "micro-owner society", where it is not at all easy for investors to carry out their renovation projects because they are faced with an extremely large number of varying interests and have hardly any legal leverage that could lead to a change in the complicated ownership structures.

"But the differences are more substantial: Whereas the gentrification process in London is now running more or less "automatically" since housing-policy regulations were abolished, and is even supported by the government in many cases, the situation in Berlin is marked by a complicated process of negotiation between revaluation and tenants' rights." In St. Petersburg, on the other hand, the reforms would have lead to a housing market that would have been so dysfunctional that gentrification processes would still be having difficulty shaping up today. "The more precise, regionally-specific analysis of gentrification enables us to conclude at this point already that this is not a uniform process that follows the same rules all over the world, but that there are substantial differences, depending on the context.

Rather than using generalising explanation models, it is better to apply more context-sensible research approaches, particularly those that include the political framework conditions in their analysis", Bernt says. According to this, more context-sensible research approaches are thus indispensable in order to enable the extremely specific political recommendations for practical planning to be outlined in greater detail. ∎

Detroit: Transformation of a metropolis

Among urban research and planning experts, Detroit is a notorious example for the abrupt rise and fall of a city. In the early 20th century, the city became the world's leading automobile metropolis. Detroit's fall, during which the Michigan State city lost almost two thirds of its population, is also legendary. Dr Manfred Kühn, research associate and deputy head of the "Regeneration of Cities and Towns" research department, examines the transformation of former US industrial metropolises as part of the work on his monograph with the working title "Periphery, planning and politics – how cities and metropolises are peripheralised". In this he shows that the local players in city politics actually contributed to the continued decline themselves and delayed a successful transformation.

Detroit's rise was closely associated with the name Henry Ford, who discovered the model for industrial mass production there and introduced it all over the world. As well as Ford, General Motors and Chrysler also set up their headquarters there back then and from that point on Detroit was the most important motor of the American economy. But the success story was not to last long. In 1953, the city's population was at its highest, since then it has been continuously shrinking. Today, some 700,000 people still live in Detroit – meaning a drop of around 60 percent and an absolute population of more than one million over a period of 60 years. After the major automobile groups and the lower-middle classes moved away, the former economic hub was relegated to the periphery of the metropolitan region. Since 2013, Detroit has also been known as "broke city" and has been placed under the administration of the Governor of Michigan.

In his book that is due for publication in the near future, Kühn presents the results of six years of periphery research and, as well as a few German cities, also looks at Detroit as the world's most famous example of a city shrinking as a result of deindustrialisation and suburbanisation.

The urban transformation of Detroit can be measured on the basis of three spatial dimensions. It is impossible to ignore the physical urban space that is characterised by large parts of the skyscraper-dominated downtown area that have fallen into ruin and the large-scale vacancy of countless office buildings and houses. "The abandoned buildings stand like ruins in the urban landscape and, today, most of the downtown area is taken up with car parks that are built on demolition sites with no discernible urban development structures", says Kühn.

The urban space used for socio-economical purposes is characterised by a post-industrial structural change and strong social and ethnic segregation. Services such as sport stadiums, hotels, casinos and a congress hall, which in some cases are only used temporarily, shape the present-day functions of the former industrial city. The mainly Afro-American population is characterised by an unparalleled social impoverishment, where many unemployed people and drug addicts eat in soup kitchens and are no longer able to pay their electricity or water bills.

"The negative image of a 'murder city' greatly stigmatises the city as a representational area", Kühn explains. The urban riots of the 1960s and the high crime rates were major catalysts that made the middle classes flee the city en masse. In the US today, Detroit is treated as a symbol of failed urban development that people don't like to talk about in public.

"Even if Detroit has major structural problems from an economic, social, urban development and financial point of view", Kühn explains, "city politics have also contributed to the further downfall of the metropolis in the past decades."

General Motors – was opened in 1977. The skyscraper complex was originally designed as a self-sufficient citadel with city-facing ramparts. As a result, this project that was cut off from the rest of the city failed to offer any incentive for further urban development; in fact businesses were actually moved from the downtown area into the Center. Subsequent large-scale projects, such as the building of sport stadiums, casinos or congress halls, at best helped to revive the city if only for a short time. In addition, city politics also pursued a radical policy of demolition for a long time without considering the historical value of the vacant buildings. The result of this failed policy can be seen today in gaps between buildings in the existing

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The deep division of the city caused by the racism displayed by the players has weakened the ability of city politics to act. The Afro-American mayor who was in office from 1974 to 1993 expedited the flight of the white middle classes with his plans to enforce ethnically mixed schools, among other things. The city's political and economical elite didn't see eye to eye for a long time and – unlike Atlanta or Pittsburgh – didn't establish any urban governance coalitions that were capable of acting.

By strictly adhering to the reindustrialisation process, they failed to recognise the potential for a post-industrial urban transformation, for example by the local university. As an early project of regeneration, the "Renaissance Center" – today the world headquarters of

city structure, empty buildings and the predominance of car parks.

After Detroit went bust in 2013, the city was in many cases written off by the media as a lost cause and its "downfall" was predicted. However, the journalists apparently failed to notice another aspect of urban transformation: Houses and fallow land can be purchased at extremely low prices in the ruined city. For some time now, these free areas have been luring people with alternative lifestyles, artists und business founders, experimenting with social economy-related community projects, back into the city. Urban gardening on fallow land is just one of the most popular examples. In the IT industry, many new start-ups have emerged over the past few years, raising

new hopes for an urban regeneration. A few major investors have also discovered the city in the meantime. Whether or not Detroit will ever regain its status as a flourishing metropolis – as insinuated in Jim Jarmusch's current film "Only lovers left alive" – remains to be seen. ∎

Global environmental change and urban transformation

As part of the research project financed by the Volkswagen Foundation entitled "New Regional Formations: rapid environmental change and migration in coastal areas in Ghana and Indonesia", the IRS will be examining the correlation between environmental change and migration in coastal areas in a consortium with the University of Bremen, the Leibnitz Institute for Tropical Marine Ecology and other partners. The research project addresses the current environmental changes that are influencing or adversely effecting the coastal areas, and examines them in relation to the likewise changing migration and mobility patterns.

Coastal areas are traditionally points of departure and arrival for population movements, particularly for migrations. At the same time, the world's coastlines belong to those areas that are hit particularly hard by the ongoing geomorphological, climatic and social changes.

In the course of this project, two regions will be examined in which the changes to the coastal morphology have been clearly felt for decades. The ecological processes that have been observed so far and continue to advance – coastal erosion in the region of Keta in south-eastern Ghana and flooding in Semarang in northern Java (Indonesia) – are typical occurrences that have been predicted for numerous

coastal regions all over the world as a consequence of climatic change. Concurrently to the ecological processes, dynamic migration processes are also taking place in the two regions under analysis in the project as case studies. Both regions are, at the same time, point of arrival and point of departure for regional and international migration.

"We're researching how people living in the affected areas evaluate environmental changes and include them in their decisions", Prof. Felicitas Hillmann, who heads not only the "Regeneration of Cities and Towns" research department at IRS, but also the subdomain dealing with migration in the research

project presented here, explains. "The specific areas the research project will be examining are migration patterns, the way in which politics deals with the changes and the economic strategies for adaptation taking into account the physical changes and the various risk cultures."

Semarang (Indonesia) will be used as an example to briefly outline the anthropological interventions that lead to the environmental changes and how migration and mobility patterns are influenced by this.

Indonesia is a very rapidly developing country whose urban population has grown considerably. Whereas in 1950

only some 12 percent of Indonesians lived in cities, this figure had risen to more than 40 percent in 2010. The urbanisation rate that describes the number of urbanites in relation to the entire population is conspicuously high in comparison to other so-called developing countries in Indonesia. This is

grow, with an estimated current population of 1.5 million. Despite the environmental problems such as floods and land subsidence, Semarang has the highest positive net migration rate in the whole of Central Java, a province that normally has a high emigration rate", Hillmann reports.

No one can say for sure what the future holds. "Nevertheless", Hillmann continues, "it can be assumed that the developmental tendencies observed to date due to an increase in global warming and existing migration corridors will see further acceleration." ∎

"We're researching how people living in the affected areas evaluate environmental changes and include them in their decisions."

primarily due to the country's rapid growth in population. Many Indonesians leave their homes in rural areas to look for work and move to the cities, preferably to megacities like Jakarta. "But smaller cities, so-called second-rate cities, such as Semarang, the capital of the province of Central Java, are also experiencing a population increase", Usha Ziegelmayer, project assistant and research associate in the "Regeneration of Cities and Towns" research department, reports.

Semarang lies on the north coast of the island of Java and, today, is one of the major trading towns and seaports. The low-lying stretch of coastline is partially composed of former marsh land; in the south the relief rises to 2,500 m. The risk of flash floods along the rivers in the wet season is high. "Today, new forestation has partly made up for the destruction of the protective mangrove forests in the 1980s in order to facilitate the expansion of fish and shrimp ponds. Land subsidence, which is compounded by massive groundwater extraction, high tides, landslides, erosion and the rising sea level are just some of the major environmental problems on the coast.", Hillmann says.

Following the declaration of independence in 1945, the urban population that originally numbered some 370,000 grew rapidly. More and more houses were built, primarily by the more affluent population, even in the more elevated regions. "Since the 1980s, Semarang has been one of the country's eight major cities, and is still continuing to

The detailed analysis of the population statistics shows that growth in the city is not divided equally between the individual sub-districts. Districts that are built on elevated areas and districts along the coastline to the east and west of the centre have been recording the highest growth rates since 2003; only individual districts in the centre record a continuous demographic decline. People move to the city particularly from the surrounding countryside.

"The environmental problems illustrated above do not cause people to leave the city en masse, but they tend to exacerbate set urbanisation patterns", Hillmann says. "The city has a high level of internal mobility. Some households leave the coastal areas and move into urban districts that are less affected by flooding. Yet the impoverished fishing villages in particular still continue to attract domestic migrants."

"Semarang is like sugar", attracting people from the surrounding areas, as the planning authorities say. Those who move away from the coast are those who can afford it. Those who stay have either made a conscious decision to do so (mostly because of the proximity to the workplace) or they belong to the so-called "trapped population" that can't leave because they don't have the financial means to go anywhere else. Government efforts to enhance the infrastructure in some districts, such as widening river beds or building retention basins, also mitigate the risk in the eyes of a population that no longer considers flooding to be an acute problem.

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Kick-off workshop
for the project
"Geographies of Dissociation"

Geographies of Dissociation

The international workshop "Geographies of Dissociation" was held in Manchester on 24 August 2015, marking the beginning of the research project of the same name. Apart from the research associates from the "Dynamics of Economic Spaces" research department, Prof. Oliver Ibert, Dr Jana Kleibert and Felix Müller, the workshop was also attended by the project partners from England (Dr Martin Hess, University of Manchester) and Sweden (Prof. Dominic Power, Uppsala Universitet) and a small group of noted researchers involved in examining the "Social construction of economic values", which included Prof. Mike Crang (Durham), Dr James Murphy (Clark), Prof. Andy Pike (Newcastle) and Prof. Peter Lindner (Frankfurt).

In the project, the scientists examine the process of creating value for products, using the global fur industry as an example. They consider both the processes of association and dissociation in the course of which a value is determined by the appreciation of a certain image or by the explicit dissociation from properties of a product that could potentially damage its reputation or decrease its value. In the kick-off workshop organised by Dr Hess, the project team discussed among other things the research design, and the concepts of association and dissociation on which it is based. They also discussed the strategies for the field work which poses a challenge in the very closed context of the fur industry.

On the day after the workshop, the IRS – represented by its director, Prof Heiderose Kilper, and Dr Karina Böhm, responsible for "International Affairs" – and the School of Environment, Education and Development, agreed a close collaboration. This is currently being set out in an agreement and shall also include, besides the cooperation in the dissociation project, staff exchanges, joint events (e.g. the IRS International Lecture or a Summer School) and support for local field work.

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On 6 July 2015, Prof. Susan Christopherson and Prof. Alison L. Bain visited the IRS for a seminar with the "Dynamics of Economic Spaces" re-

search department on the topic of the "Spatiality of Creativity Driven Work". Susan Christopherson holds the chair for "Urban and regional planning" and is a professor at the Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. Alison L. Bain is Professor of Geography at the York University in Toronto.

In the seminar, creative practices and their spatiality were examined from both an urban and economic-geographic perspective. Bain addressed the topic of how artistic spaces influence urban districts, their function as local anchors and the possibilities they present for integrating neighbourhoods, using Berlin-Moabit as an example.

Christopherson is researching the organisational and spatial restructure of the film and media industry in the US and analysed in her contribution the relationship between flexibility and social security mechanisms – for example, tariffs negotiated by trade unions – in this industry.

Representing the "Dynamics of economic spaces" research department, Prof. Oliver Ibert and Dr Suntje Schmidt discussed Open Creative Labs as new temporary spaces for various forms of creative collaboration.

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The many faces of creativity
Conference on "Creativity in Arts and Sciences: Collective Processes from a Spatial View"

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Creative results are based just as much on scientific breakthroughs as they are on artistic masterpieces and have been discussed for quite some time as key drivers for the various processes in knowledge-based societies. Creativity is crucial for economic development, but it is also necessary for finding solutions to social challenges. In view of this social relevance, many scientific disciplines are interested in creative processes and are trying to understand what conditions can be improved by generating creative results. "Today, there is broad consensus across disciplinary boundaries that creativity should no longer be considered to be an individual achievement, but instead should be seen as the result of social processes", says Prof. Oliver Ibert, head of the "Dynamics of economic spaces" research department. There are always many people involved in generating creative results; these are based on cooperation and need not only sponsors, but also the constructive contribution of critics.

An international conference, organised by the IRS in cooperation with the University of Turku and the Freie Universität in Berlin and with the support of the German Research Foundation (DFG), was held on this topic in Erkner on 7 and 8 May 2015. The purpose of the event was to initiate an interdisciplinary discussion, based on spatial categories, in which empirical findings on creative processes in art and science can be systematically interrelated.

"This seemed promising, because irrespective of disciplinary approaches to creative processes the practices under examination must always be anchored in space and time", Ibert, one of the organisers, explains. "We invited international experts from the organisational sciences, sociology, anthropology, the fine arts, and science and technology research to share their insights in the sessions of Places/Milieus, Mobility/Travel and Centre/Periphery."

The conference showed that although more and more highly reflected forms of organised creativity can be observed, the ensuing research activities hardly relate to each other. Empirical findings are fragmented and the dialogue between the disciplines is challenging. There are also few concepts that draw abstract conclusions above and beyond the domain-specific findings; arts and science, in particular, are often seen as very different fields of creativity.

In the conference, Ibert also sees signals that the spatial perspective can promote exchange across disciplinary boundaries. It has been proven that creative processes in arts and sciences show great similarities in terms of the techniques involved in making new discoveries. At the same time, it is also evident just how different both are when it comes to evaluating these new discoveries. ∎

See also:
::: www.irs-net.de/creativity-
conference/gallery.html