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Peripheral Small Towns

Quo Vadis? – The Potential of Peripheral Areas

Trendsetters – Urban Redevelopment in Peripheral Small Towns

Networking – European Small Towns Designing their Future

Power and Powerlessness – Small Towns in the GDR



Small Towns in Rural Areas – What are the Possibilities in the Periphery?

Small towns and peripheral regions – this generates associations with inconsequentiality in two ways. While being small impedes a town's chances of achieving supra-regional recognition, their peripheral location remote from big cities and conurbations severely constrains their development opportunities. One glance at the statistics confirms that small towns in peripheral areas are particularly affected by the problems of demographic change and economic structural weakness. This makes it hard to be optimistic about the future. Yet, for all that, an IRS study reveals that potentials do exist and can be exploited.

In Germany, there are about 1,300 peripherally located small towns, three quarters of which are characterised by a shrinking population. This poses the danger of a downward spiral: population decrease leads to a loss of purchasing power, lower tax revenues and financial payments from the state. As a result, municipalities will have less money available for investments. Indeed, they will have to start downsizing public infrastructures such as schools or swimming baths. This will, in turn, promote an exodus (and impede an influx) of qualified workforce. As a result, more and more peripheral small towns will find themselves left behind and peripheralised to an increasing extent. In fact, the periph-

eralisation of small towns in rural regions has many faces. In some of these towns, the station has been closed down, while others are still waiting for their direct access to the motorway. In view of the fact that they have not yet been connected to the broadband network for cost reasons, fast Internet access is still not available in many peripheral regions. Moreover, polytechnics and universities are mostly located in middle-sized and big cities – and thus small towns have a hard time attracting and retaining highly qualified workers. As a consequence of economic structural weakness and demographic ageing, public and private investments are on the decline in many peripherally locat-

ed small towns. "In many places, time seems to have come to a halt in such a strange way", says Dr. Manfred Kühn, currently head of the IRS research department "Regeneration of Cities and Towns". "This also applies to many West German small towns formerly located in the so-called "Zonenrandgebiet", (i.e. areas adjacent to what used to be the Eastern Bloc). After reunification in 1990, dynamics of development were clearly shifted towards the new federal states."

Kühn states that this negative view is far from appropriate for all regions and adds that we should by no means understand peripheralisation as an inescapable fate. "Throughout the past

few years, spatial researchers have described a phenomenon according to which some rural German regions exhibit surprisingly strong demographic and economic growth dynamics despite their extremely peripheral location”, urban planner Kühn points out. Examples include small towns in Eastern Bavaria, Franconia, the Lake Constance region or the Emsland. A fair number of peripheral small towns are home to small and middle-sized enterprises that are world market leaders in their respective specialist field. Examples include Otto Bock Health Care in Duderstadt or B. Braun Medical in Melsungen. Given that many other enterprises are less well-known, they are

The IRS research department “Regeneration of Cities and Towns” is mainly interested in the question of what municipal urban policy can do to avert further peripheralisation despite extremely tight scopes for action (i.e. economic structural weakness, scarce municipal financial and limited human resources). Would it even be possible to turn the ascribed deficits and locational disadvantages typical of peripheral areas into specific advantages and, if so, how? The Cittaslow-Network, for instance, turns the spotlight on values like slow movement, sustainability and quality of living (cf. the contribution by Prof. Dr. Heike Mayer on page 5).

In this context, the participating researchers conducted a nationwide analysis of data, four case studies and a workshop discussion with representatives from urban research, ministries and municipalities. The case studies referred to the small towns of Braunlage (Lower Saxony), Hanseatic Town Havelberg (Saxony-Anhalt), Uecker-münde (Mecklenburg-Hither Pomerania) and Waldmünchen (Bavaria).

“So-called ‘bypassing’ is one possibility to overcome the state of being peripheral”, Kühn explains. This concept implies skipping the nearest regional centre by establishing connections with superordinate (national or international) scales. For example, municipalities located at the edge of the federal territory may establish bi-national networks with adjacent municipalities. Waldmünchen, a small town of 7,000 inhabitants situated in the Bavarian Forest serves as an example here. Together with its Czech neighbouring municipalities, Waldmünchen launched a cross-border coalition for action called Cerchov. With the aid of a number of energy villages, the region thus made an attempt to distinguish itself as an energy region. The small town of Havelberg, which is situated at the federal state boundary of Saxony-Anhalt and Brandenburg, has formed a cross-border special purpose association together with its neighbouring towns Brandenburg an der Havel and Rathenow in order to push through plans for the national garden show against initial resist-

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often referred to as “hidden champions”. The image of peripheral small towns improves further once we take into account surveys revealing that small town residents reveal relatively high levels of contentedness. This is certainly not least due to comparatively favourable housing conditions. In comparison to middle-sized cities, big cities and conurbations a significantly higher share of small town residents live in owner-occupied homes.

Instead of solely addressing problems, the IRS preliminary study (conducted on behalf of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, and in cooperation with the Brandenburg Consulting Company for Urban Renewal and Modernisation mbH) decided to focus on the potential of peripheral small towns.

DEFINITION



Peripheral and Peripheralisation

According to a spatial planning perspective, a “peripheral” location is defined by its position in a sparsely populated area remote from big cities. As a consequence, a peripheral location refers to far-off rural spaces. Such a definition also implies that cities beyond a certain size cannot be regarded as peripheral. By contrast, the IRS regards “peripheralisation” as a socio-spatial process and thus renders this term applicable to both urban and rural spaces. Accordingly, the term peripheralisation is used to describe relational processes of decline for urban and rural spaces in comparison with other spaces. This notion therefore embraces phenomena like an outflow of residents, an abandonment of infrastructure networks, the heteronomy of decision headquarters, and stigmatisation in the media. Such a process approach to peripheralisation allows us to extend our analyses beyond rural areas so as to include towns that serve as centres within peripheral regions.

ance from the federal states. For the peripheral Havel region, this will ensure an at least temporary centrality and will help to increase its visibility.

With respect to the possibilities for peripheral small towns, the pilot study identifies the following three main fields:

Potential related to urban planning and socio-spatial aspects

In many peripheral small towns with historical centres, urban planning-related potential mainly concerns the high quality of living, short distances and the proximity to the countryside. Socio-spatial potentials can be identified in respect of the manageable size of these towns, the high density of associations and the high degree of personal relationships. Apart from these rather traditional features, there also exists potential for innovation due to international immigration and the integration of migrants – not least as a means to address the shortage of skilled workers in peripheral regions. Small towns, for example the North Hessian Wanfried, are proof that a proactive immigration policy adopted from the Netherlands can help to establish new ways of using abandoned buildings, gardens and other areas. In history, there are several examples of settlement policies aimed at reviving derelict peripheries (e.g. the Huguenots in Prussia).

Potentials of regional cultural landscapes

Due to their manageable size and form, small towns and their surrounding landscapes are often perceived as one single spatial unity. In fact, cultural landscapes offer important possibilities for urban development in that they help to promote tourism, regional recreation, as well as leisure and sports activities. By means of strengthening the linkage with agriculture and forestry, small towns could also draw on the old tradition of market towns. Moreover, the now booming renewable ener-

gies sector offers new possibilities, too. Together with regional development concepts, inter-municipal cooperation between “town” and “country” can help to further mobilise the potential of the countryside.

Potential related to employee qualification

Due to their financial situation, many small town administrations are unable to retain sufficiently qualified workforce or to recruit creative minds from outside. Opportunities related to employee qualification are thus of particular relevance for developing innovative ideas. This also includes transferring experiences with other small towns across Germany and Europe so as to become acquainted with possible ways of dealing with multifaceted problems. It also includes, however, new forms of consulting, administration

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and management. In the future, staff competences available in rural districts, city networks, and foundations could be increasingly exploited with a view to strengthening the creative development of small towns.

“On the whole, it turns out that many small towns in peripheral rural regions are facing particularly tough challenges. At the same time, the financial and human resources available are modest and will probably decrease in the years to come”, Kühn concludes. It is therefore a challenging, yet not impossible task for urban research and urban policy to find creative ways out of this dilemma. ■

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Small Towns in Europe: Between Local Embeddedness and International Networking

Lüdinghausen, Penzlin, Hersbruck, Waldkirch – these places will be hard to find on a large-scale map. Given the fact that these four towns are emblematic of the numerous German small towns that exist in the shadow of adjacent metropolises, this is hardly surprising. In spite of being largely unknown, these small towns have made active attempts to shape their future. Together with eight other German small towns, these four towns have joined the international Cittaslow (Slow City) Movement in order to maximise their potential. First established in 1999 in Italy, Cittaslow pursues the goal of promoting quality of life through deceleration and by way of utilising individual potential. It would thus be wrong to claim that small towns have remained in a state of convenient dependency on nearby metropolises. Instead, we should understand them as a key component of the European urban system; in fact, numerous examples are proof of how actors in small towns actively shape the future.

More than a fifth of the European population resides in small towns. If we solely consider Europe's peripheral areas, this share even amounts to one third, or even more than 50% in some areas, such as Italy or Scandinavian countries. Small towns also play an important role for Germany's urban system. According to spatial observations made by the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR), 33% of the German population live in small towns with 5,000 to 20,000 inhabitants. Small towns are not only important in terms of population, but also with regard to their economic dynamics. One current study (Dijkstra et al. 2013) on the growth dynamic of different regions in the EU15 countries

shows that small and middle-sized towns as well as rural areas have experienced higher economic growth rates (GDP per capita) than big cities since 2001. Besides, the study points to the fact that population growth figures in European small and middle-sized towns have hardly differed from those for big cities since 2001.

Speculating about the reasons for these figures, the authors of the study have invoked improved accessibility and infrastructures as possible reasons, alongside negative externalities in big cities. They came to the conclusion that many western EU states have experienced a trend since 2001 which runs counter to traditional forms of urban-rural transitions. It therefore appears fair to say that,

compared to big cities, small and middle-sized towns show some positive dynamics today. The study does not, however, present any insights into employment trends. It thus remains unclear to what extent these towns are developing dynamic economies reaching beyond their territorial borders. These aspects are of fundamental importance – especially with view to the possible peripheralisation of these towns. However, the results of this study clearly suggest one thing: the focus on metropolises, which has dominated not just academic research, but also the practice of spatial planning in recent years, has obscured our view of small towns, rural areas, and the functions they have within the typically polycentric European urban system.

There are several examples of actors in small European towns actively shaping their future. The above-mentioned Cittaslow-movement is only one among many. 170 small towns across the world have joined this movement and are now organised within one international network. Local politicians and citizens from South Korea, China, and the US regularly exchange views with their European counterparts on how to develop small towns. In doing so, they all share an awareness of the problems connected to dealing with local tendencies of peripheralisation and marginalisation. By means of innovative projects related to environmental protection, tourism, and local economic development, these small towns have started to break new ground by means of outlining ways small towns may strengthen their roles and functions. The Cittaslow-movement is an example of such promising initiatives. There are many others. Small towns in Sweden have joined forces to form an “Eco-Kommuner” movement. In Great Britain, there is the “Fair Trade Town” movement that pursues the goal to introduce fair trade products to a larger number of customers. The “Alp’s Alliance” helps to establish networks among small towns and municipalities in the Alpine region. In a similar manner, the “Northern Periphery Programme” aims to establish linkages among peripheral regions and municipalities in the EU’s northernmost regions.

The Cittaslow-network has, for example, helped to establish a link between Lüdinghausen (a small town in the northern Ruhr area) and Penzlin, which is located in the middle of the Mecklenburg lake district. These two small towns have, however, also established a network with Yaxi (the first Cittaslow in China) and with the eleven South Korean Cittaslow-towns. A look at the map shows that all these towns are situated in peripheral areas. By virtue of the networks established among more than 150 Cittaslow-towns worldwide, actors

have generated new forms of importance and, in this manner, managed to overcome the peripheralisation they are often struggling with. In concrete terms, this networking implies that urban planners, politicians, but also the residents of these towns jointly develop new ideas and projects for urban and regional development and exchange the knowledge drawn from their activities with international partners. For example, thoughts on sustainable urban development were exchanged at an international congress which was held in a South Korean Cittaslow. Notably, Cittaslow-towns are also nationally organised and therefore have the capacity to make their voices heard on a national level. In this way, networks help these small towns to overcome their peripheral role on both a national and international level. ■

CONTACT



Dr. Heike Mayer is professor for economic geography at the Institute of Geography and deputy director of the Center for Regional Economic Development at the University of Bern.

Her research is mainly related to local and regional development, with a particular focus on innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic development. Small towns and rural areas are at the heart of her analyses. She is member of the IRS Scientific Advisory Board.

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Cittaslow – A European Network for Small Towns

By now, there exist more than 150 Cittaslow-towns across Europe. Italy is the country with the largest number of members. A look at Europe’s economic centre often evokes the concept of the “Pentagon”, which is framed by the big cities of London, Hamburg, Munich, Milan, and Paris. While covering only 14 per cent of Europe’s surface, the Pentagon plays a key role in that it comprises 43 per cent of Europe’s economic performance and 75 per cent of all investments in research and innovation. Many small towns certified by the Cittaslow-movement are located outside the Pentagon.



At the End of the Planning Chain? Small Towns in the GDR

In the GDR, the development of small towns was closely intertwined with state-socialist economic policies and urban development. For the state's planned economy, urban development served as a key regulatory instrument. But what did this specific opportunity for state-socialist territorial planning – with its aspiration to plan economic and urban development in an integrated manner – actually imply for East German small towns, and their role and development within the GDR between 1949 and 1989? A DFG-funded research project currently conducted at the IRS focuses on exactly these regions and districts to find out more about their position and scope of action within the GDR's planning system and its overall system of power and government.

According to the 1986 edition of the "GDR's Small Political Dictionary", the Socialist Unity Party (SED) and the "apparatus of state" were both based on the principle of democratic socialism. This principle stipulated that legislation and resolutions should be enforced strictly in a top-down manner and this approach was considered to guarantee a smooth and coherent functioning of all spheres of social life and across the entire country. As the GDR's governing party, the SED's comprehensive claim to power was based upon an imagined unity of interests which did not allow for an independent regional representation of interests (which might also have deviated from the SED's top-down plans). "As a matter of princi-

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ple, the centralist planning system used to take its decisions on the basis of overall national goals, which are always defined or modified by superordinate authorities", says Dr. Oliver Werner, a historian employed at the IRS. "The central government even had the power to circumvent binding agreements to the detriment of the regional, urban, or district level. These subordinate political levels thus could never be sure whether or not their own interests would be considered." As a result, the economic, party

and state officials of subordinate districts, small or medium-sized towns, or big cities relied principally on pushing through their interests even against the formal norms of the plan.

In the GDR, the dissolution of the federal states and the formation of new districts and regions in the summer of 1952 had left towns and cities almost without any financial autonomy whatsoever. At the same time, this reform was geared towards making public administrations more

receptive to planned targets and, moreover, to enable them to mobilise local reserves so as to guarantee the fulfilment of the policies. “In the beginning, political leaders always regarded existing structures, networks, and administration procedures with mistrust”, Werner explains.

According to official documents, a comprehensive examination of the district of Bad Freienwalde (located in the region of Frankfurt (Oder)) in March 1954 revealed several “reactionary activities” in the municipalities as well as “serious deficiencies” as regards the “control in implementing these decisions”. Family relationships among administration employees – which are bound to exist in small towns – were pilloried as “unjustifiable family politics that have most grossly violated the principles of cadre policy”. Such investigations served as a means to weaken smaller towns in their ability to circumvent central regulations. At the same time, these measures diminished their flexibility to implement the planned objectives through self-initiative.

“In practice, the emergence of new socio-spatial disparities represented an obstacle to the socialist ideal and the formulated programme that intended to level out existing urban-rural gaps”, Lena Kuhl explains. Together with Werner, Kuhl is involved in the project “GDR Districts – Actors between Power and Powerlessness”. “Population decline, decaying old towns, and insufficient social infrastructure all had an impact on everyday life in numerous GDR small towns and rural regions.” The situation of individual towns depended on their function and spatial location. Towns with administrative or industrial functions could benefit from massive allocation of resources – both within or across districts. In connection with the construction of a crude oil processing plant of GDR-wide importance, the peripherally located small town of Schwedt an der Oder had successively been developed and

extended to a middle-sized district capital since the 1950s. Together with Eisenhüttenstadt, Schwedt served as a key element in the projected idea to transform the district of Frankfurt (Oder) from an agricultural to an industrial district. “Sparsely populated and agrarian northern districts were the focus of the structural programmes. By contrast, southern districts like Karl-Marx-Stadt, Dresden, and Leipzig already existed as industrial and urban agglomerations with a dense settlement and infrastructural pattern – and as such did not receive any special funding”, Kuhl reports. As a consequence, hardly any resources were left for the majority of those towns and cities that were not able to attract attention as prestige projects themselves.

Instead of supporting each and every housing estate or small town, the idea was now to define certain centres of surrounding areas according to their size and position within the larger settlement network and, on this basis, give priority to them by way of providing them with more complex social facilities.

Whereas policy programmes had until the late 1960s been characterised by an attempt to equalise structural and industrial differences, a clear shift of priorities occurred in the 1970s. From then onwards, programmes put a strong emphasis on the immediate improvement of living conditions and on the supply of housing for the entire population. In the context of increased rationalisation efforts, the goal was now narrowed down to extending already existing centres and intensifying links between towns (and cities) and their surrounding areas.

Instead of supporting each and every housing estate or small town, the idea now was to define certain centres of surrounding areas according to their size and position within the larger settlement network and, on this basis, give priority to them by way of providing them with more complex social facilities. Housing and living

conditions were to be improved by a decentralisation of settlement structures. To this end, basic infrastructure, the accessibility of stores, hospitals, high schools and cultural centres were considered essential variables. As part of the GDR’s structural planning for settlements, the definition of several categories of settlement types and corresponding levels of infrastructural equipment were intended to prepare the settlement network’s development in a scientific manner. “The associated hierarchisation process actually resulted in a degradation of rural settlements and small towns”, Kuhl and Werner emphasise. “By this means, arguments according to which small towns had a right to express their own interests were devalued in a systematic manner.”

Owing to these shifts of emphasis, the GDR’s urban and spatial planning policies can be characterised as a redistribution of resources rather than radical programmes affecting



the entire state. However, the exclusion from territorial planning (in the sense of comprehensive structural policies) actually also increased local responsibility in terms of complying with the housing construction programme. Towns, villages, and settlements that did not benefit from corresponding planning measures were forced to take action themselves. Central programmes thus aimed

to encourage individual initiative in accordance with the overall system. Alongside the establishment of municipalities associations or competitions under the title “Schöner unsere Städte und Gemeinden - Mach Mit!” (“Make our cities and communities nicer – get involved!”), increased emphasis was put on the relevance of municipal actors for tackling the challenges related to urban development and housing. Since the 1970s, local politics was mainly expected to promote an increasing number of local measures to advance (hitherto neglected) building repair and maintenance measures. As a means to facilitate the private construction of residences, modernisation as well as conservation measures, it was planned to improve the supply of the population with building materials.

At a certain point the activation of non-state resources reached its limits, though. Financial means for social infrastructure, social and cultural facilities were earmarked in the district plans. The factual arguments put forth by local officials did not dare oppose the logic of democratic centralism. For instance, the report “The First” by GDR journalist Landolf Scherzer portrays the situation in the district capital Bad Sal-

zungen in the late 1980s. At that time, Bad Salzungen lacked about 600 flats. The resolutions made by the superordinate council of Suhl, however, only allowed for newly-built flats to be built in the neighbouring town of Merkers. While only 30 people were registered as looking for a flat in Merkers, an important potash factory was located there. All the efforts of the party secretary and the president of the council to build new housing where it was actually needed ultimately proved to be in vain.

“This led to a situation where central planning turned out to be disproportionate to local implementation”, Kuhl and Werner conclude. “The lower levels of power were not equipped with sufficient decision-making power and resources to fulfil their increasing responsibilities for urban and municipal development.” The central programmes’ focus on changing priorities led to a neglect of numerous small towns that did not have special status within the GDR’s settlement or production structure. They were located at the end of the planning chain. In the late 1980s, not even informal relationships or the mobilisation of local reserves could serve to compensate for this development. ■



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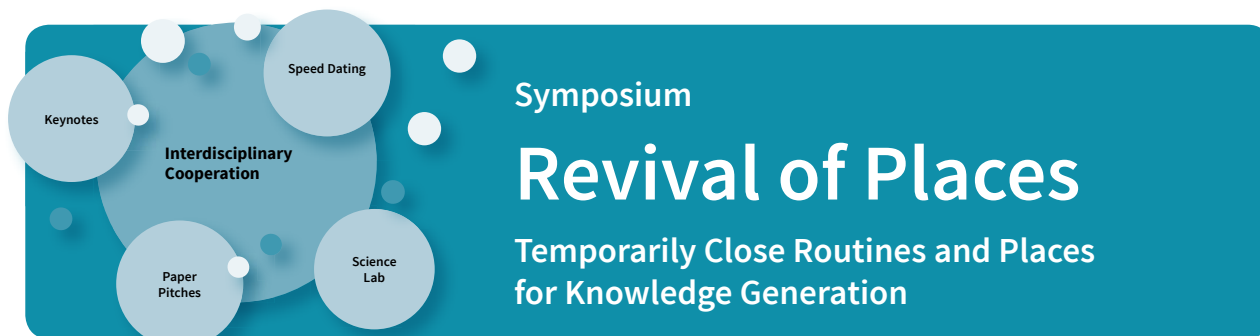
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Revival of Places Temporarily Close Routines and Places for Knowledge Generation

Economic structural change has not only brought about profound changes with regard to economic processes and actor constellations, but has also induced a concomitant reinterpretation and reutilisation of work routines and work places. The Herrenhauser symposium “Revival of Places” (funded by the Volkswagen Foundation) took place on 2-4 April, 2014 in Hano-ver and shed light on interdisciplinary research approaches on these transformation processes.

Social scientists from disciplines such as geography, sociology, organisation or cultural sciences have shown that both space and time are of particular importance for the knowledge economy. Due to the high relevance of (at least temporary) face-to-face contacts for the generation and exchange of knowledge, these discourses underline that dimensions like proximity, distance, space / spatiality, and time need to be considered from new perspectives. At the same time, an explicitly interdisciplinary theoretical and conceptual debate on places of temporary cooperation in knowledge generation has yet to emerge. This is where the symposium “Revival of Places” came into play, which was jointly organised by Dr. Suntutje Schmidt (IRS research department “Dynamics of Economic Spaces”) and Dr. Anna Grove (University of Freiburg).

The focus was on two thematic perspectives. Firstly, the symposium assessed the strategic use of temporary spatial proximity in the context of economic processes for which the generation of new knowledge plays a key role. In doing so, particular attention was paid to the interplay between phases of co-localisation (with all advantages usually attributed to classic agglome-

ration effects) and phases of long-distance collaboration (where other forms of affinity such as cognitive proximity / social closeness also come to the fore). The second thematic block then dealt with novel spatial and temporal working configurations.

Co-working spaces, FabLabs, or Maker Places are examples of novel organisational and spatial solutions for project-based working. At the same time they combine employment-related with experience-oriented activities. Besides, enterprises themselves create interfaces between themselves and their environment so as to advance open innovation processes.

Apart from the topic-related interdisciplinary exchange, the symposium also pursued the goal of furthering networking activities among young scholars. To this end, the organisers engaged in academic speed-dating and paper pitches to intensify and promote exchange among participants. The keynotes by Prof. Dr. Ariane Berthoin Antal (WZB Berlin), Prof. Dr. Johannes Glückler (University of Heidelberg), and Dr. Sebastian Olma (Serdipity Lab, Amsterdam) served as a means to provide a thematic frame for the symposium.

Finally, the ideas, research approaches and questions posed were pooled in the form of a Science Lab. This lab was meant to facilitate experimentation with ideas and was supposed to help transfer the networking generated by the symposium into more advanced forms of cooperation. In fact, first results already became evident, as the Science Lab yielded ideas for two expert meetings that were submitted to the German Geographers’ Day (Deutscher Geographentag) 2015 in Berlin. ■

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Prof. Dr. Dominic Power at the
3rd IRS International Lecture on
Society and Space
**Collecting – Arranging –
Exhibiting: Curation and
Curators in Economic
Geography**



Shoes, Champagne, Cars – a product's value is not solely determined by producers and consumers. Instead, intermediaries like distributors or the media also have a major say both in setting the price at which a certain good is sold as well as with regard to defining the immaterial value in terms of prestige and distinction it entails for its new owner. This was the main argument presented and discussed by Prof. Dr. Dominic Power (Uppsala University, Sweden) at the 3rd IRS International Lecture on 27 March, 2014. On this occasion, Power introduced curators as a specific type of intermediary, exploring their characteristic features as well as the spatial dimensions of curation.

Entitled "Producing through Curation: the Economic Geographies of Curation and Curators", Power's presentation suggested a change of perspective with regard to spatial analyses of value creation processes. "A great deal of research has been conducted on the spatial organisation of production, on economic clusters, and the international division of labour. Likewise, numerous studies have attempted to gain a more detailed insight into consumers' behaviour", says Power. For him, the point is, however, that a lot of things happen to the product in between two points in time – occurrences that shape the product's value. For example, Power draws our attention to this intermediate level with

the example of an enthusiast who has maintained a blog on high quality men's shoes in Great Britain for several years. The blogger is extremely well-informed about both the producer's and consumer's perspective.

As a result, he is able to filter, select, assess and comment on the market. "We must not underestimate these filtering processes, since they are often decisive for the question of what sells and what doesn't", Power explains. Among other things, he refers to art theory and describes this valorisation process as curation. According to Power, curation occurs permanently and affects almost all products – be it in the press, at events such as trade fairs, or online via social media. As regards the online travel market, for instance, the portal Tripadvisor has now become well-established. In fact, its performance is composed exactly of the mix of filters and ratings which is also applied by classic curators putting together an exhibition.

The discussion, which began with a statement by Prof. Dr. Gregory Jackson (FU Berlin), allowed the audience to intensively exchange their thoughts on various potential geographies of intermediaries and their impacts with the speakers.

Finally, IRS director Prof. Dr. Heiderose Kilper thanked Dominic Power for providing numerous insights and ideas from a developing branch of research with a promising future. ■

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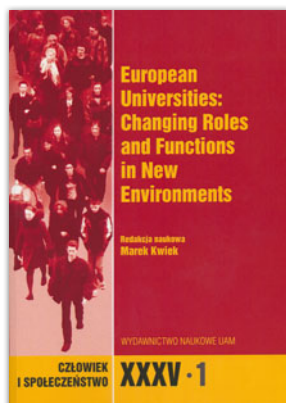
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Just published
European Universities:
Changing Roles and Functions
in New Environments



In a knowledge-based society, education – and in particular higher education – plays a central role and is known as the single most important factor for promoting productivity and competitiveness.

In its Lisbon Agenda, the European Union has hence ascribed a decisive role to higher education and universities. This poses a challenge to all European higher education institutions (HEIs). Arising from their particular location at the periphery of national territories, additional demands are placed on border-spanning HEIs. These spaces often suffer from structural economic weakness. Given the fact that it is in border regions areas where different European cultures meet, HEIs are considered essential for the promotion of regional economic development in such peripheral spaces. European cross-border universities are therefore often equated with laboratories for Europeanisation.

These conditions provided the starting point for the project “BorderUni”, which was funded by the German-Polish Science Foundation (DPWS) and conducted under the direction of the IRS in cooperation with the Centre for Political Studies at the University of Poznan (CPPS/AMU). The research conducted focused on both external and internal interaction pro-

cesses within the context of cross-border cooperation among German and Polish HEIs.

Everyday processes of communication were of as much interest here as practical routines in bi- and tri-national cooperation and the associated intercultural learning processes emerging from situations where two institutions with differing national regulations and educational traditions collide. Also of particular interest were the developing hybrid forms of regulations and structures that have evolved in the form of novel institutional arrangements designed to master the challenges of cross-border university cooperation.

Part 1 of this volume presents the research results of this project, including contributions by IRS researchers Dr. Heidi Fichter-Wolf (on Europeanisation as cultural change and intercultural learning) and Prof. Dr. Hans-Joachim Bürkner (on interculturality and transculturality).

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Just published
Special Issue of the Journal
Social Sciences on Resilience

In January 2013, the IRS and the HafenCity University Hamburg jointly conducted the international conference “Constructing Resilience”. The high level of professional quality and the diversity of contributions encouraged the organisers to submit a special issue to the peer reviewed journal Social Sciences.

Contributions by some conference participants have already appeared in the journal’s regular issues 2/4 (December 2013) and 3/1 (March 2014), including Prof. Dr. Oliver Ibert, Prof. Dr. Gabriela Christmann, Dr. Timothy

Moss, and Dr. Suntje Schmidt (all of them IRS), as well as David Stark (Columbia University, New York).

Moreover, Kevin Fox Gotham and Richard Campanella (Tulane University, New Orleans) are further authors involved. Together with other contributions that are to be published in future issues, these articles make up the virtual special issue “Constructing Resilience, Negotiating Vulnerability”, which is available on the Internet.

... www.mdpi.com/journal/socsci/special_issues/constructing-resilience



4th IRS INTERNATIONAL LECTURE
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Harriet Bulkeley

The Urban Politics of Climate Change: energy systems and the art of experimentation



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