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Small and Medium Sized Cities –
Driving Forces of Peripheralisation

HUNGARIAN REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION 14th ANNUAL MEETING
Plenary session 1

Oradea, Romania, Sep 15, 2016
1. Urban Growth and Shrinkage in Europe

2. Peripheralisation of Cities
   2.1. Research approach
   2.2. Relations: Centralisation and peripheralisation
   2.3. Drivers: out-migration, disconnection, dependency

3. Conclusions
1. Urban Growth and Shrinkage in Europe

Average annual population development in European Local Administrative Units

- up to below -2.0
- -2.0 up to below -1.0
- -1.0 up to below -0.1
- 0.0 up to below 1.0
- 1.0 up to below 2.0
- 2.0 and more

*9 LAU2 levels: 2001-2011
**11 LAU2 levels: 2001-2011

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Spatial polarisation:

- the **in-migration** in growing cities is the **out-migration** from shrinking cities.

- increasing **socio-spatial disparities** between cities and regions.

- **Downward spiral** of shrinkage and decline?
**Shrinking Cities**

- Selective **out-migration** of younger and higher qualified groups („brain drain“)
- **Weak economy**: desinvestments, low qualified and payed jobs, unemployment
- **Vacancies of flats**: unmarketable properties („Schrott-Immobilien“)
- **Shortage of municipal finances**: saving costs politics
- **Closure of infrastructures**: schools, hospitals, stations etc.

**Growing Cities**

- **In-migration** of younger and higher qualified groups („Reurbanisation“)
- **Strong economy**: new investments, high qualified and payed jobs
- **Shortage of flats**: prices increase of tenements and properties
- **High municipal investments**: new housing and infrastructures
- **Extension of infrastructures**: airports, roads, schools etc.
The research approach …

- … offers a **dynamic understanding** in contrast to static definitions of peripheries (geografical remote areas, rural areas)
- … is seen as **complementary process to centralisation** (within a polarized development)
- … deals not only with **demographic** but also with **socio-economic and political processes** to explain shrinkage
- … underlines **options for actors** and possibilities for **de-peripheralisation**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Centralisation</th>
<th>Peripheralisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demografical</td>
<td>in-migration</td>
<td>out-migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>population growth</td>
<td>population shrinkage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economical/Infrastructural</td>
<td>growth of employment</td>
<td>decrease of employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>high qualified work</td>
<td>low qualified work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>extension of gateways</td>
<td>closure of infrastructure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>decision power</td>
<td>dependency</td>
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<td>inclusion to networks</td>
<td>exclusion to networks</td>
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</tbody>
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Processes of Peripheralisation

**Disconnection**
- Innovations dynamics
- Transport networks (gateways)
- Social infrastructures

**Dependence**
- Disadvantages by decisions of centers
- Exclusion from networks

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**Peripheralisation**

**Out-Migration**
- of qualified workers and trainees
- "brain drain"/ dequalification
- population shrinkage and aging

Self-reinforcing processes
4. Conclusions

- **Peripheralisation** is an approach to explain urban shrinkage by a mixture of demografical, socioeconomic and political processes.

- Peripheralised cities and regions are characterised by **out-migration** of higher qualified people, **dependency** to centers of command and control and **closure of infrastructures**.

- **Education, Qualification and Innovation** are key issues in the knowledge society, which may enable shrinking cities to avoid downward spirals.

- A **De-Peripheralisation** is possible: Small and Medium sized Cities need more decision power (local government, headquaters of firms).


Thank you for your attention!

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