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Comparing Planning Cultures in Shrinking Cities Across the USA, Germany, and Japan: Perspectives From Urban Planning on the Refiguration of Spaces and Cross-Cultural Comparison

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Key words: figurational sociology; cross-cultural comparison; sociology of space; spatial analysis; refiguration of spaces; comparative planning cultures; shrinking cities; Germany; USA; Japan; semi-structured interviews; purposive sampling; qualitative content analysis

Abstract: Spatial planners deal with aspects related to the quality of life and future development of cities and regions, which are highly relevant for society. Due to various institutional and cultural settings, spatial planning systems emerged with comparable features. However, such systems have been adapted to specific cultural, normative, and spatial conditions. In our study, we conducted a comparison to investigate changes in planning cultures in the context of shrinking cities across the USA, Germany and Japan. The findings make it possible to detect interdependencies between changes in planning cultures and societal changes in the wake of shrinkage processes and potentially to place planning cultures in the perspective of a refiguration of spaces. We conclude with the hypothesis that planning cultures are framed by an array of factors in a somewhat polycontexturalized mode, such as geographic entities (nations, regions, cities), and also topics such as shrinking cities.

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1. Introduction

Spatial planners deal with aspects related to the quality of life and future development of cities, which are highly relevant for society. Urban planners deal with many challenges cities have to face, including population losses and economic transitions. In this respect, many cities in Europe, the USA, and Japan are being confronted with challenges posed by long-term demographic and economic changes (UEMURA, 2015; WIECHMANN & WOLFF, 2013). In reference to the discourse of the "Shrinking Cities International Research Network" (SCiRN), WIECHMANN (2006) defined a *shrinking city* as a "densely populated urban area with a minimum population of 10,000 residents that has faced a population loss in large parts of it for more than two years and is undergoing economic transformations with some symptoms of a structural crisis" (p.6). [1]

In terms of instruments and policies, PALLAGST and WIECHMANN (2005) claimed that planning for shrinking cities does not operate under the same assumptions as those that prevail in the case of urban growth, but rather requires a paradigm shift. For international comparative research, it remains to be seen whether this change in planning culture will be a general trend in planning or a notion driven by local and national specificities. The frame of what is considered a planning system can be manifold. For example, there is a certain fuzziness about the term *planning system*, and the terms *planning systems*, *models of planning*, and *planning cultures* are often used synonymously (PALLAGST, 2019). In the German planning realm, the term planning system is widely used, whereas the term models of spatial planning is more common in the Anglo-Saxon literature on planning (DÜHR, COLOMB & NADIN, 2010). [2]

Regardless of these terminological differences, it is characteristic of planning systems to be *embedded in national contexts*, as experts dealing with planning (planners) use this term in order to describe planning activities in a specific national context. Consequently, these terms are expressed as the German, French or Japanese planning system. In these different institutional and cultural settings, spatial planning systems are formed in line with specific cultural, normative, and spatial conditions. In Germany, for example, the planning system is influenced by federal state structures, offering a concise planning system with a range of planning levels. [3]

Nonetheless, the purpose of planning systems is to deal with space and urban and regional development, which is why they also exhibit comparable features to some extent. Planning systems are precisely defined by the national context, whereas planning cultures are understood in a wider sense as they can also be attributed to smaller territorial entities—for example, California's planning culture, West Germany's planning culture (PALLAGST, 2019). In line with the growing demand for international knowledge exchange in urban and regional planning, planning cultures have recently come into sharper focus (KNIELING & OTHENGRAFEN, 2009a; LEVIN-KEITEL & OTHENGRAFEN, 2017; SANYAL, 2005). While there are several definitions of *planning cultures*, the most widely

used is that proposed by KNIELING and OTHENGRAFEN (2009b), defining planning culture as follows:

> "Planning culture might be understood as the way in which a society possesses institutionalized or shared planning practices. It refers to the interpretation of planning tasks, the way of recognizing and addressing problems, the handling and use of certain rules, procedures and instruments, or ways and methods of public participation. It emerges as the result of the accumulated attitudes, values, rules, standards and beliefs shared by the group of people involved. This includes informal aspects (traditions, habits and customs) as well as formal aspects (constitutional and legal framework)" (p.43). [4]

In this article, we have compiled the results of a research project tracing changes and modifications to policies and strategies in shrinking cities and—as a result—unravelling hypotheses for planning cultures. In order to do so, we discuss what planning cultures are and how they relate to the concept of refiguration of spaces in Section 2. In Section 3, we explain our comparative research design for investigating planning cultures by comparing US, German and Japanese planning cultures. In Section 4, we compare the traditional national planning cultures of our three cases. In Section 5, we show in which ways cities in these countries were effected by urban shrinkage. In Section 6, we reveal how planning policies and strategies were adjusted in these cities in order to cope with this shrinkage. In Section 7, we conclude by relating planning cultures to the concept of refiguration of spaces. Following the rationale of this thematic issue, our primary intent is to shed light on the refiguration of spaces from the perspective of planning cultures. As KNOBLAUCH and LÖW (2017) pointed out, there are many indications that the spatial organization of sociality is changing. However, because we lack adequate concepts for this, our grasp of these changes remains vague. [5]

2. Conceptual Framework

In order to investigate how planning is changing in view of shrinking cities, we turned to the research sphere of planning cultures. OTHENGRAFEN (2010) specified the *criteria needed to define planning cultures*:

1. the *general context* displays the basis of a planning culture comprising a more general understanding in terms of general beliefs and unconscious or taken-for-granted assumptions that affect planning, for example, the bicycle-friendly society in the Netherlands or the car-oriented USA;
2. the *planning context* displays the values and beliefs of professional planners;
3. the *planning toolset* refers to the policies, strategies, and instruments employed in a specific setting. [6]

For our study, we considered the third criterion (the planning toolset) to be a relevant area of investigation and modified it accordingly. While the topic of planning cultures may have experienced a recent rise to prominence in planning debates, there is an undeniable level of ambiguity when it comes to defining the

topic (FÜRST, 2009). There is now a considerable amount of discourse on the topic of planning cultures, and scholars have suggested several definitions. The term planning cultures appears, for instance, in SELLE's (1999) work on collaborative planning. Interest in the topic of planning cultures may also be fueled by what is known as the "cultural turn" in planning (KNIELING & OTHENGRAFEN, 2009c, pp.xxiv; see also SANYAL, 2005), emphasizing the role of culture in spatial planning. [7]

In particular, the growing demand for knowledge exchange and comparative research projects initiated by the European Union (EU) makes it clear that planning culture is a component that is deeply embedded in a nation's planning system and therefore the national context needs to be considered (FÜRST, 2009). At the beginning of the discourse on planning cultures, the narrative was based on planning cultures coinciding strongly with planning systems, thus relating to national levels. However, this discourse has recently opened up to the local level (REIMER, 2012), which indicates a more complex interplay and shows aspects of what KNOBLAUCH and LÖW (2017) labeled as *polycontexturalization.* [8]

Since about 2005, several researchers have investigated planning cultures in more detail: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), for instance, published an edited volume entitled "Comparative Planning Cultures" (SANYAL, 2005). Another significant piece of research is the EU-funded project "Planning as Culture in Europe" (CULTPLAN), which addresses planning cultures in Europe and takes the research work further by discussing theoretical approaches and suggesting a "culturized planning model" (KNIELING & OTHENGRAFEN, 2009d, p.318; see also OTHENGRAFEN, 2010). Furthermore, scholars have suggested viewing planning cultures at the level of urban areas (REIMER, GETIMIS & BLOTEVOGEL, 2014). While more and more academics have shaped the notion of planning cultures, it appears the definition is becoming even fuzzier. Subsequently dismantling planning cultures reveals a multilayered subject facing constant change, in part induced by factors such as Europeanization (REIMER et al., 2014), globalization (SANYAL, 2005), growing competition between cities and regions (NEWMAN & THORNLEY, 2005), and demands for comparative research (PALLAGST, 2019). [9]

KNOBLAUCH and LÖW (2017) reasoned that "polycontexturalization is a process implying bodies, things and meaning, thus affecting space" (p.12). Planning cultures can be understood in this respect as in their general context (see above), they are highly influenced by different beliefs and assumptions, which in turn are shaped by ethics, normative frames, societal conditions, economic systems (for example, planned economy versus market-based economy), and culture. Thus, *planning cultures can be regarded as polycontexturalized*. Planning cultures follow a spatial logic, yet their reference to polycontexturalization is also highlighted by the "simultaneous relevance of different spatial scales, dimensions and levels" (ibid.). Moreover, KNOBLAUCH and LÖW argued, "[p]olycontexturalization implies that we do not expect the mere dissolution of territorial and homogenizing spatial logics" (ibid.). In this respect, HEALEY and

WILLIAMS (1993) noted that planning systems can only change to a certain extent as each system is somehow fixed within a given legal, political, or administrative framework. The respective changes in line with new challenges are to be seen as "defensive reactions" (p.715) instead of pro-active reforms. Yet, this body of literature leaves a distinct gap for more reflective, empirically-driven research on planning cultures. [10]

3. Comparative Research on Planning Cultures

The research presented here is motivated by the hypothesis that shrinkage generates the necessity to enforce changes (PALLAGST, 2010), reforms, and even innovations in planning cultures. The social, economic, and spatial transformations triggered by shrinking processes present specific challenges for urban development and spatial sciences (GÖB, 1977; HÄUSSERMANN & SIEBEL, 1988; HOLLANDER, 2018; HOLLANDER, PALLAGST, POPPER & SCHWARZ, 2009; OSWALT, 2004; PALLAGST & WIECHMANN, 2005). The causes and effects of shrinkage have comparable trajectories in different countries (PALLAGST, 2009; PALLAGST & WIECHMANN, 2005). However, national discourses and suggested solutions are likely to differ. For this reason, we can argue that international comparative research offers a purposeful engagement with planning cultures and expands empirical research of the subject. [11]

Consideration should also be given to the fact that planning in the USA, Germany, and Japan is limited to very specific and different cultural settings. In the research presented here, we selected these *countries* according to the *most different systems approach*, based on comparative studies in political sciences (OTNER, 2010). The objective of our research is to investigate changes in planning cultures in the context of shrinking cities across the USA, Germany, and Japan. Our aim is also to carry out a comparative analysis of the planning strategies and instruments connected to urban shrinkage and its causes. The findings will allow us to detect interdependencies between changes in planning cultures and societal changes in the wake of shrinkage processes and finally to derive hypotheses for both the future-oriented development of shrinking cities and the development of planning cultures based on the comparison of cultural settings. [12]

We chose the spatial frame of cities to investigate shrinkage and planning cultures. We not only saw this spatial frame as a *container space*, but also we took into account the factor of time in terms of investigating the evolution of specific paths of shrinkage within these spaces. Thus, the concept of relational spaces (BAUR, 2005, pp.76-78) was the main consideration for the spaces involved. We selected the *cities* involved in the case study research (namely, Cleveland, Bochum, and Nagasaki) based on the *most similar systems approach* (PIERRE, 2005). This choice was also motivated by the results of the Action "Cities Regrowing Smaller" (CIRES) funded by the "European Cooperation in Science and Technology" (EU COST), which showed that, of all the European cities with more than 10,000 inhabitants, those with a population between

300,000 and 500,000 are most often affected by shrinkage (WIECHMANN & WOLFF, 2013). In this project, knowledge was gathered on regeneration strategies in shrinking cities across Europe. The EU COST action promoted a network of scholars throughout Europe acting as a catalyst for new solutions to deal with demographic changes and to design the restructuring process for shrinking cities in Europe. All three of these cities have similar population sizes, shrinkage patterns, and industries. Additionally, all three cities have applied major strategies to find innovative solutions to shrinkage-related problems. In this case study, we applied a contextualized comparative approach to find variations, and we put common features and differences at the center of the investigation (BOOTH, 2011). The selection of case study cities was also based on the following hypothesis:

- Severe shrinkage problems are present in all three cities, leading to a change in traditional planning strategies and the use of traditional instruments. Traditional planning instruments are those instruments that are well established in a specific planning context and, in most cased, embedded in a legal framework. For the German context, this would include *Bebauungspläne* [zoning plans] and *Flächennutzungspläne* [land use plans]. The original intention of these instruments was to steer the growth of a city in line with a growing population.
- Planning strategies are embedded in the local cultural context and cannot be transferred, or can only be transferred with difficulty, to other cities despite similar conditions.
- Despite this limited transferability, there are signs of convergence in the development of planning cultures initiated by shrinkage. [13]

To unravel strategies and measures utilized in shrinking cities, we applied the method of *embedded case study research* (YIN, 2003 [1984]). As part of this approach, we conducted an in-depth analysis of the actors and assessed their motivation, actions, opportunities, and limits. The core of the investigation relied on primary data from 40 semi-structured interviews (MEUSER & NAGEL, 2002) in the years 2017 and 2018 with government agencies (city planning departments, regional entities, and ministries), political decision makers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), developers, and academics. The sampling of interview partners for this research was based on purposive sampling, specifically operational construct sampling and snowball sampling (PATTON, 2002). We prepared and evaluated these interviews on the basis of statistical data, archival material, and a sound review of literature on shrinking cities in the USA, Germany, and Japan. Additionally, our institutional partners in the case study locations supported us with ideas for meaningful projects and institutional representatives for the interviews. The analysis was conducted as a qualitative content analysis according to MAYRING (2007). [14]

The interview questions on all cities partly were focused on the current situation regarding population development and housing, as well as possible critical points in the history of urban development (for example, major shutdowns of plants, the

introduction of policies, etc.). Furthermore, we recorded the perception of shrinkage as a problem (both by city officials and the public) and specific policies applied in neighborhoods with high vacancy rates to stabilize prices and improve the quality of life. In addition, we considered specific aspects regarding the cities, such as suburban development in Cleveland, the metropolitan/regional setting of Bochum, and national programs in Japan. We verified the results at a workshop (2017 in Kaiserslautern) with a select number of stakeholders from the case study cities in order to generalize the findings. This workshop offered practitioners and academics the opportunity to discuss and anticipate the possible impacts of changes in planning for shrinking cities, outline uncertainties and gaps in knowledge regarding planning for shrinking cities, and identify the possible impacts for research on planning cultures. [15]

4. Traditional National Planning Cultures

The research presented here arises from the question of how discourses around specific topics or problems in planning might affect planning cultures, thus contributing potentially to polycontexturalization and consequently a refiguration of spaces. Just like planning cultures, the shrinking cities phenomenon is a multi-dimensional process, comprising cities, urban districts, and metropolitan areas (PALLAGST, 2008). However, economic transformations in particular as a trigger for shrinkage have very different characteristics depending on the national, regional, and local contexts (CUNNINGHAM-SABOT & FOL, 2007). [16]

4.1 US planning culture

US planning culture has traditionally been market-oriented, developer-driven, and influenced by Nimbyism (PALLAGST, 2007). Individual decisions are strongly driven by the forces of the market and intertwined in economic competitiveness. In terms of growth, all of these aspects work hand in hand, thus creating a powerful circle of interests, which all promote growth. However, the development is not as smooth as it might appear. One of the flaws of market-based decisions is the fact that they are based on the individual decision maker. While market forces may be efficient, they support inequality in areas with high real estate prices (METCALF, 2003). These consumer choices are not managed or regulated, and the individual decision maker is not obliged to take the impacts on society or the community into consideration (ibid.). Moreover, the needs of future generations cannot be considered by a solely market-based approach since it leaves out environmental and social considerations (PALLAGST, 2007). In this respect, the property-driven interests of individuals (HOCH, 1994) often juxtapose planners' concepts and viewpoints in terms of sustaining the quality of life for communities. Apart from urban growth, many brownfields from industrial and commercial sites lie abandoned. This problem is to a wide extent linked to regional US-wide disparities. Metropolitan areas in the Rust Belt like Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and Detroit are losing population, while the coastal areas continue to grow. However, brownfield sites are unattractive for developers since they might be contaminated, and decontamination is both costly and time-consuming. The unwillingness to convert brownfields in many parts of the US can be traced back

to the American planning culture's pervasive penetration by market mechanisms. Moreover, the strong fascination with growth rooted in the US planning culture often views shrinking cities as a taboo, which makes it difficult to generate interest in designing planning policies for shrinking cities. [17]

4.2 German planning culture

German planning culture offers quite an elaborate multi-level planning system, where policies, plans, and strategies are implemented at every level: nation, state, region, and municipality. The German government has introduced a normative framework for the development of the entire country. Utilizing what is known as the *Gegenstromprinzip* [countercurrent principle], planning levels are intertwined within a complex and inflexible system of consultations and negotiations. While economic changes have occurred in many old industrial areas in Germany since the 1970s, the debate regarding shrinking cities and policy-making began when the eastern part of the country started to suffer from the dramatic effects of post-socialist economic transitions. Combined with sustained processes of out-migration, this led to a lively debate on the issues of shrinking cities after the year 2000 (WIECHMANN & PALLAGST, 2012). [18]

4.3 Japanese planning culture

As for Japanese planning culture, the central government plays an important role in a highly hierarchical planning system. In the near future, however, scholars expect the importance of the local level to grow (MALLACH, HAASE & HATTORI, 2017; UEMURA, 2017). In this regard, SORENSEN (2011) pointed out that a shift in power en route to decentralized policy-making has already occurred, but any direct influence of local governments on policies and planning strategies is still in its infancy. The fact that the entire country is faced with demographic change and an aging population serves as a strong impulse for Japanese discourses on shrinking cities. Thus, in the Japanese context, shrinkage is not limited to specific areas. [19]

5. Facing Shrinkage in Selected Cities

All three planning cultures are confronted with shrinkage. The question is: how do shrinking cities in these most different systems react? Various options could be considered in this respect: Will Japanese planning open up its hierarchical structures, or will its hierarchical organization facilitate the implementation of new policies regarding shrinkage? Will the US planning culture be able to enact policies that offer a more comprehensive view of planning, taking into account both the regional level and the city level? And will the German system offer more flexibility in its operation in order to provide faster and more efficient planning solutions? [20]

5.1 US: Cleveland

In the US, Cleveland's growth in the early twentieth century was fueled by its strategic location at Lake Erie and important waterways during the industrialization period. The city reached its peak population of around 915,000 inhabitants during the 1950s (PALLAGST, FLESCHURZ, NOTHOF & UEMURA, 2018). However, by the end of the 1960s, Cleveland's economy was dealing with several problems similar to the structural changes experienced by other old industrial cities. A general trend of de-industrialization set in during the 1970s, leading to a further loss of jobs and population (COPPOLA, 2014). Interviews with a number of stakeholders in the city surprisingly revealed that the perception and awareness of shrinkage as a problem had started quite late, after the 2007–2008 financial crisis. Thus, this point marks a critical juncture for the city and the point at which policymakers started to focus more on shrinkage. [21]

5.2 Germany: Bochum

Bochum is a classic German example of an old industrialized city that started losing population following the decline of the mining and steel industries. In 1927, Bochum had around 70 mines, one of the largest concentrations in Europe.[1] The focus on a single industry can be identified as the main reason for the difficult economic development in Bochum and the Ruhr Area as a whole. Thus, the incipient downturn of this industry in 1958 led to Bochum's general decline. While there were policies and strategies in place to tackle shrinkage to some extent, the turning point in Bochum, much like Cleveland, was in the year 2008 (interviews with city planning staff and NGOs) when the Nokia and Opel plants closed in the city. Thus, this can be seen as a critical juncture for the city's policies. [22]

5.3 Japan: Nagasaki

Nagasaki is one of many Japanese cities with a declining population. Since the number of people in Japan in general is decreasing, most cities have declining populations, arising from high numbers of out-migrants and a negative natural population balance. The early 1990s saw the beginning of a trend of industrial decline, which has continued until today and exacerbated population shrinkage (YAHAGI, 2014). The city of Nagasaki remained in a stage of unawareness regarding shrinkage for quite some time, followed by slight policy adaptations between 2008 and 2013. Nagasaki's critical juncture appears to be the publication of "Local Extinctions" by MASUDA in 2014, after which the shrinkage discourse became more public in Japan. [23]

Looking at the three cities' trajectories of decline, we find somewhat comparable characteristics. This should not come as a surprise as the downward spiral was caused by economic/post-industrial transformations (in all three cases) and demographic changes (in Germany and Japan). Moreover, every case presented

1 https://www.bochum.de/zechen [Accessed: September 23, 2016].

planning policies and strategies to deal with shrinkage. However, this happened —at least in part—over different periods of time and with different focuses. [24]

6. Re-Adjusting Policies and Strategies to Cope with Shrinkage

During our research, we identified a broad range of strategies in the cities. A list containing a vast number of strategies implemented in the case studies and structured in line with a typology of strategies is shown by PALLAGST et al. (2018). The authors of the project grouped these strategies into the following categories: urban regeneration guidelines, economic policies, guidelines for urban structure, master plans, substitute industries, land banks, greening/green infrastructure, cultural (temporary) uses and infrastructure, neighborhood programs and plans, communication and public consultation. Examples of these categories in each case study city are displayed in Table 1.

Policies and Strategies	**Cleveland**	**Bochum**	**Nagasaki**
Urban regeneration guidelines	Greater University Circle	*Stadtumbau West* [Urban restructuring program for the Western federal states]	Nagasaki Prefecture Basic Policy for Vibrant Town Management
Economic policies	Cluster formation (health, education)	Cluster formation (Masterplan University-City)	National Town, Human, and Job Creation Plan
Guidelines for urban structure	Health Corridor, Walkable Downtown	*Stadt der Wissenschaft* [city of science]	Compact Network City
Master plans	Connecting Cleveland 2020 Citywide Plan	Master Plan University-City	Nagasaki City Master Plan of Urban Planning
Substitute industries	Downtown Cleveland Alliance	*Gesundheitscampus* [Health campus]	Tourism (cruise ship terminal)
Land banks	Cuyahoga County Land Bank	Proprietary state fund	Nagasaki Vacant Land Information Bank
Greening, green infrastructure	Bikeway Master Plan	*Emscher Landschaftspark* [Emscher landscape park]	—
Cultural (temporary) uses, infrastructure	Ohio City Zoning Plan	*Industriepfad* [Industrial trail]	—

Policies and Strategies	**Cleveland**	**Bochum**	**Nagasaki**
Neighborhood programs & plans	Forgotten Triangle Master Plan	*Stadtumbaugebiet Bochum "Innere Hustadt"* [Urban development concept for the "Inner Hustadt"]	Town development on slopes e.g., North Oura district
Communication, public consultation	Ohio City Zoning Charette	*Beteiligungsverfahren Campus Quartier Lennershof* [Public participation Campus Quartier Lennershof]	Public consultation about the future of *kinkai* [coastal areas]

Table 1: Select policies and strategies implemented in the case study cities [25]

The analysis reveals that planning strategies appear—in our opinion—representative for each specific case's approach to shrinkage on the one hand. On the other hand, they showcase innovations in planning for the given context, for example, introducing specific guidelines for urban structure in Nagasaki or green infrastructure in Cleveland. Based on key strategies and policies and the general approach the cities are following, we can derive three different trajectories, which help to characterize the cities' planning cultures. [26]

6.1 Cleveland: Focused growth

As the interviews and investigations on site revealed, development in Cleveland is targeting specific neighborhoods that appear to be of interest to private investors. This is in line with the category "urban regeneration guidelines" shown in Table 1. From the 1960s onward, the local government realized the economic impact of shrinkage. Nevertheless, targeted policies were only implemented much later, following the 2008 economic crisis. Underpinning the focused growth planning culture, we were able to identify the following three neighborhoods that are promoted as development hubs by the City of Cleveland such as downtown development, the "Greater University Circle Initiative" (GUCI), and lakefront development. In this respect, Cleveland's planning policies and strategies are for the most part in line with the national planning cultural context: planning strategies predominantly target strategic neighborhoods in an attempt to revive (economic) growth. Nevertheless, the development of a master plan (Table 1) with the purpose of steering the development of the entire city is a new endeavor, something that is new to US planning culture. [27]

6.2 Bochum: Unifying approach and growth

Bochum's approach to shrinkage can be described as "unifying," meaning it shows a strong affinity toward regional planning and the attempt to amalgamate existing initiatives. Furthermore, it is also possible to note recent growth patterns. Four phases can be identified in the regional development policy. In the first phase (1966–1974), integrated policy was the key element that led to the foundation of Ruhr University Bochum. During the second phase (1975–1986), development was guided by a more central approach. The state supported cities and the region in managing structural change. Vacant industrial sites were redeveloped for this purpose.[2] The third phase (1987–1999) was marked by attempts to promote regional approaches like the *Internationale Bauausstellung Emscher Park* [Emscher Park International Building Exhibition] and several follow-up projects like the *Emscher Landschaftspark* [Emscher Landscape Regional Park] (Table 1) and to complement the top-down approach of the previous decades with bottom-up initiatives. In the fourth phase (since 2000), fragmented projects have been replaced by a comprehensive strategy. The federal government has enacted programs like *Stadtumbau West* [Rebuilding the City West], an urban regeneration program, or *Soziale Stadt* [Social City]. In Bochum, several neighborhoods are funded through these programs.[3] [28]

The recently updated master plan presents a comprehensive strategy for improving Bochum through a range of projects.[3] This plan, and its predecessor from 2009, represents the first comprehensive development strategy in decades (interview with member of the Bochum city council). The City of Bochum's existing planning approaches seem to be in line with the German planning culture's notion of the countercurrent principle (Section 4.2). They are aimed at bridging different levels of planning and seeking a unifying approach. Consequently, this aspect of planning to counteract shrinkage seems to revisit traditional German planning culture. Interestingly, Bochum's master plan has a very similar trajectory compared to the one found in Cleveland (categories in Table 1). [29]

6.3 Nagasaki: Top-down implementation and reaction

Nagasaki's planning culture is influenced by the fact that planning is directed by the central government in a top-down system. Consequently, the city has been in a position to react. During the 1980s and early 1990s, the central Japanese government had, like other countries, neglected the problem of shrinking cities. During that time, the economy was highly fueled by the asset price bubble. The bubble was driven by speculations in economic development and after it burst, the country spiraled into a sharp economic decline, known as the "lost decade" (OKINA, SHIRAKAWA & SHIRATSUKA, 2001). [30]

2 http://www.ruhrgebiet-regionalkunde.de/html/erneuerung_der_infrastruktur/strukturpolitik_fuer_das_ruhrgebiet/strukturpolitik_phase_2.php%3Fp=4,2.html [Accessed: July 24, 2021].

3 https://www.bochum.de/C125830C0042AB74/vwContentByKey/W2BFGEBV502BOCMDE/$FILE/Integriertes_Gesamtkonzept_Bochum_Ost_2014.pdf [Accessed: September 26, 2016].

With rising awareness of the problem of shrinkage, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, several laws regarding planning and the tax system were reformed to give the municipalities more options and better tools to deal with shrinkage (referred to as Trinity Reforms). In general, this has introduced a new form of participation in Nagasaki (interview with a researcher at Nagasaki Institute of Applied Science). Recent planning activities in Nagasaki started with the interventions made by the central government, during which it placed a stronger focus on shrinkage. This reactive initiative from the city is somewhat surprising given the intensity of the shrinkage problem. It remains difficult to judge whether city officials have accepted shrinkage and are finally dealing with its consequences or whether the strategies implemented remain in passive-reactive mode like in past decades. In this respect, Nagasaki still shows a strong attachment to the existing hierarchical planning culture. Nevertheless, it is possible to detect some new policies and strategies such as a focus on guidelines for urban structure with an emphasis on compact cities (Table 1) and the development of a comprehensive master plan with the Nagasaki City Master Plan of Urban Planning (Table 1). [31]

7. Conclusions: Planning Cultures and a Refiguration of Spaces?

In this article, we have demonstrated the trajectories and strategies implemented by shrinking cities, yet there are still loose ends and unresolved methodological challenges. Given the empirical results of the research, one might inquire about the implications of shrinking cities for planning cultures and the areas of research that merit further investigation—potentially also in the context of a refiguration of spaces. When analyzing the case study cities, we were able to identify several *commonalities*, such as the development of master plans and, to some extent, the guideline of a compact city for future development. Indeed, there seem to be *traces of global trends in terms of policies and strategies* influencing shrinking cities. [32]

Nonetheless, *traditional planning cultures still linger with regard to their complexities and localities in the cases investigated*. In Bochum, there seems to be a stronger focus on traditional patterns such as the countercurrent principle (as described in Section 4.1). As for Nagasaki, the city is not yet able to initiate its own strategies and policies and still follows the procedures of implementing the national government's requirements. Cleveland follows the traditional path of inducing growth and substitute industries. In this respect, the spatial logics shaped in line with polycontexturalization articulate a complex framework of different levels, actors, normative regulations, and values throughout the respective cases. All in all, the case study cites have implemented a myriad of polices and strategies at different levels, strongly influenced not only by the respective national planning culture, but also by the specific conditions related to the challenges of shrinkage and decline. At the beginning of the research project, we hypothesized that planning strategies can only be partially transferred from one planning context to another. Nevertheless, it might be possible to trace similar tendencies. The research presented here demonstrates similar or comparable patterns of strategies in the case study cities. Some strategies can be derived from the genuine context of shrinkage, such as temporary uses (Pop

up City in Cleveland), or the acquisition of substitute industries (Health Campus in Bochum, University Circle in Cleveland, tourism in Nagasaki). Other strategies, policies, and guiding principles for planning correspond to general trends in planning. Interestingly, the compact city principle can be found in Bochum and Nagasaki alike and—at least in part—in the focused growth approach used in Cleveland. It is still not clear how these strategies interact with one another, how decision-making processes determine the selection of a particular strategy, and whether there might be other types of strategies. Further research should take these aspects into consideration. [33]

For a long time, urban and regional researchers have associated *planning cultures with specific* national settings or countries (SANYAL, 2005), much like the term *planning systems* (PALLAGST, 2019). In these discourses, planning cultures—for example, of the USA, Germany, and Japan—are considered more or less homogeneous entities. Further research (REIMER, 2012) has broadened this perspective, placing planning cultures in the context of planning levels and distinguishing between national, regional, and urban spheres. It is here where traces of polycontexturalization can be credited to the sphere of planning cultures. [34]

In view of the developments caused by shrinkage and the changes in planning revealed in the empirical part of the research on the subject, one might ask whether the notion of planning cultures is bound to change as much as planning is. Thus, we can formulate the hypothesis that there might be planning cultures that are not solely framed by geographic entities (nations, regions, cities), but rather by topics such as shrinking cities. If so, how can planning cultures be characterized or operationalized? This could in turn provide insight into a new research sphere of *topical planning cultures*. Along the same lines, PALLAGST, FLESCHURZ, NOTHOF and UEMURA (2021) have framed initial ideas for an operative definition of planning cultures. Accordingly, planning cultures are defined as follows:

> "Planning culture encompasses the societal aspirations towards planning—its processes and its outcomes. It refers to the values and shared beliefs of stakeholders involved in planning, and the methods and tools they are applying and producing. Planning cultures are not static but constantly evolving in line with societal changes or planning related challenges. Planning culture as we see it can be attached to specific territorial entities, be they nations, sub-nations, regions, or cities most likely but not necessarily within administrative boundaries. In addition, it can be attributed to cities or regions having to face specific planning problems" (p.177). [35]

While the lasting effects and successes of the policies and strategies implemented in shrinking cities remain to be seen, planning cultures reveal themselves as a multifaceted sphere with attributes of *polycontexturalization* and thus might be framed in—or contribute to—the notion of a refiguration of spaces. [36]

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