

Dealing with Peripheralisation in Urban Development – The Case of Pirmasens

Dr. Sabine Weck
ILS

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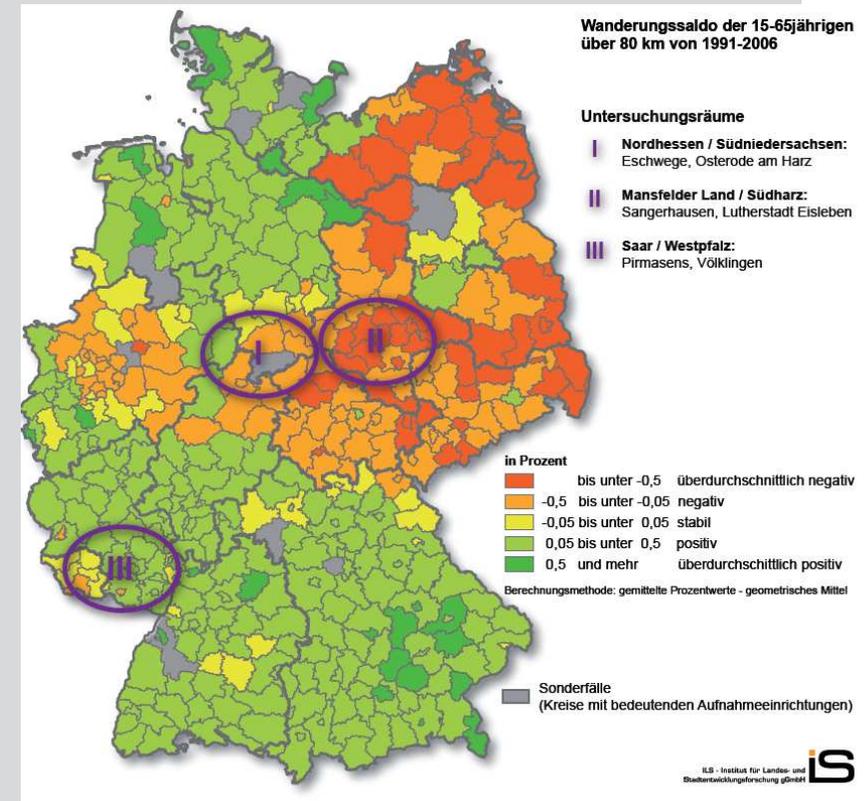


The Research Project

- City careers of six middle-sized cities in peripheralised regions (Stadtkarrieren in peripherisierten Räumen); Jan 09 – Dec 11
- *Research Cooperation:* IRS – Leibniz-Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning and ILS – Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development
- *Overall research question:*
 - What are peripheralisation processes doing to the cities under study? How are they perceived by local stakeholders?
 - How do peripheralisation processes shape local scope for action?
 - How are local policy makers dealing with peripheralisation processes?

Peripheralisation

- Puts emphasis on the process character of how peripheries are created and re-created as part of economic, social and cultural processes
- The different processes of continuing out-migration, disconnection (infrastructural/economical), dependency (economical/political) or stigmatization can be distinguished



Pirmasens



- Mono-industrialised agglomeration; dominated for decades by a single industry (shoe production)
- Withdrawal of American military forces 1995-1999
- Peripheralisation processes since the 1970s; „crisis“ mid of the 1990s

Peripheralisation in Pirmasens since the 1970s

Out-migration	Outmigration especially of young and highly-qualified
Disconnection (ambivalent)	<p><i>Economically:</i> Growing competition; demise of the shoe industry's growth and success model; domestic shoe manufacturers off-shoring their production</p> <p><i>Infrastructurally:</i> Even in times of economic centrality (Germany's leading shoe-producing city in the 1920s, 1950s, 1960s), Pirmasens remained peripheral and was by-passed by main national transportation systems</p>
Dependency (ambivalent)	<p><i>Politically:</i> Dependency on external funding sources for local key projects</p> <p><i>Economically:</i> Pre-dominance of family-owned SMEs</p>
Stigmatisation	Supra-local media focussing on negative images

Dealing with peripheralisation in Pirmasens (1): Local governance in Pirmasens

- From government to governance by partnership (1990 - 2000)
- Private business engagement investing time and money (city marketing, social commitment, financial investment into the city)
- Strategic governance: Vision of „Pirmasens 2010“, city master plan
- Strategy of building on its own strengths and potentials (eg. building upon Pirmasens‘ core competence of a shoe city towards a shoe competence cluster)

Dealing with peripheralisation (2): Multi-level policies in Pirmasens

- Selective approach when accessing national or supra-national funding programmes (based on priorities set in the local context by vision “Pirmasens 2010” and city master plan)
- Positive role of state authorities (eg support provided by the state in converting the former military base in Husterhöhe or in the decentralization policy for the University for Applied Sciences Kaiserslautern)
- Inner-regional co-operation plays a minor role; competition dominates

Chances for reducing peripheralisation in Pirmasens

- Local governance forms reflect and take up endogeneous strengths, e.g. micro, small and medium enterprises as the main business innovation drivers, built into locally embedded, effective governance forms
- Consistency of strategy-building over the last 15 years, including wide scope of initiatives, also in the areas of education and social affairs
- First signs of success in dealing with peripheralisation now being registered by experts (not by local population however)

Resume

- Neither location nor accessibility only define the central or peripheral status of a city: a wider concept of peripheries is more adequate
- Centres and peripheries are not mutually exclusive, but overlapping designations capable of changing over time
- Pirmasens as an example for locally embedded, effective governance forms: Consistency of strategy-building over the last 15 years, involvement of private business in urban development
- There are limits to the local capacity of dealing with peripheralisation: Necessity of accessing and utilising supra-local (state) resources
- More studies are needed that look in detail at political & economic nature of small cities

Thank you for your attention!

Dr. Sabine Weck

ILS

Sabine.Weck@ils-research.de