



University of Natural Resources
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Department of Spatial-, Landscape-
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Institute of Spatial Planning
and Rural Development (IRUB)

Soil Protection revisited under shrinking Circumstances – A new Challenge?

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ESF-Symposium 2009

Stockholm, August 27th, 2009



Schrumpfung

– die Achillesferse der (Raum)Planung

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Im Auftrag des Club of Vienna (COV)
Wien 2008

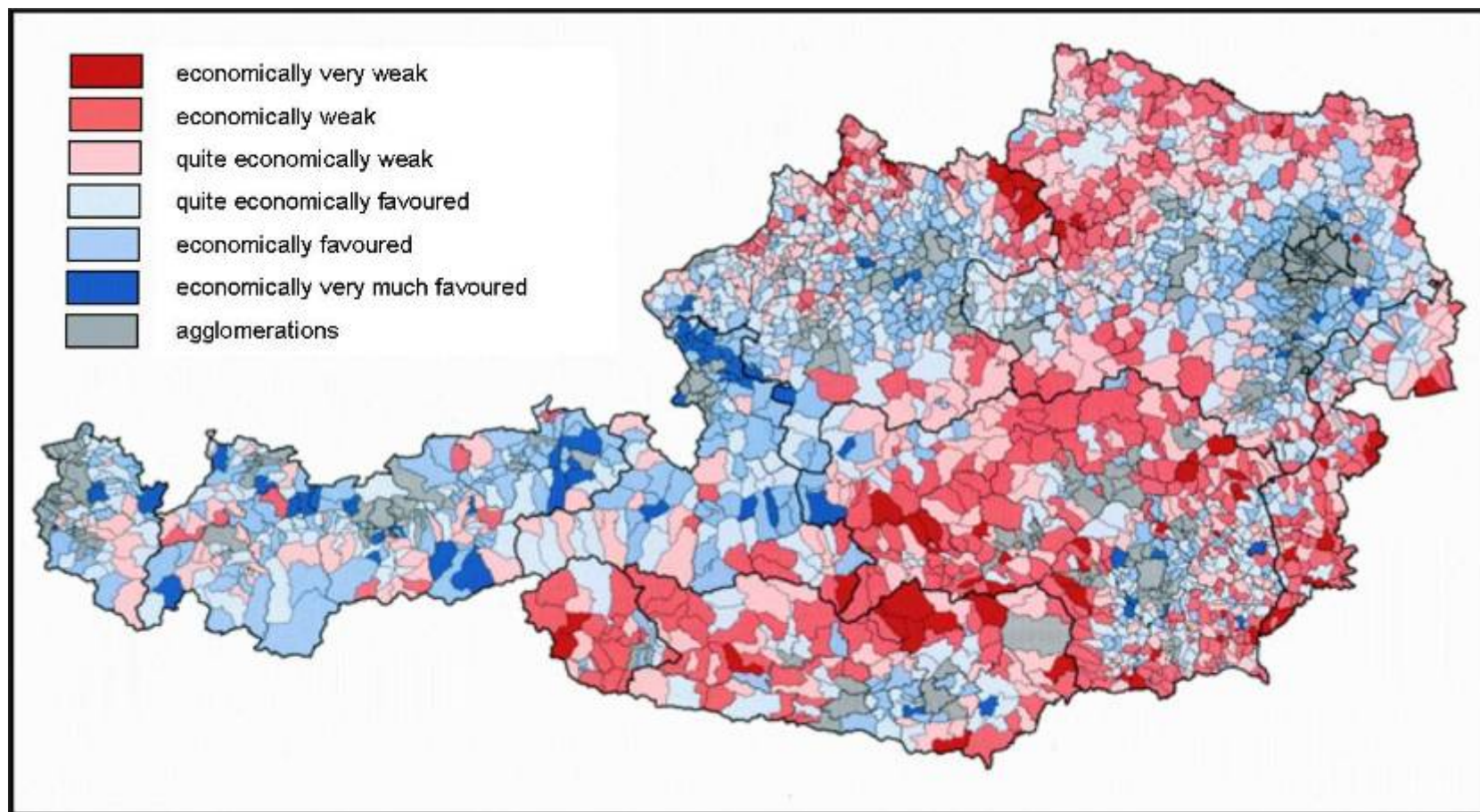


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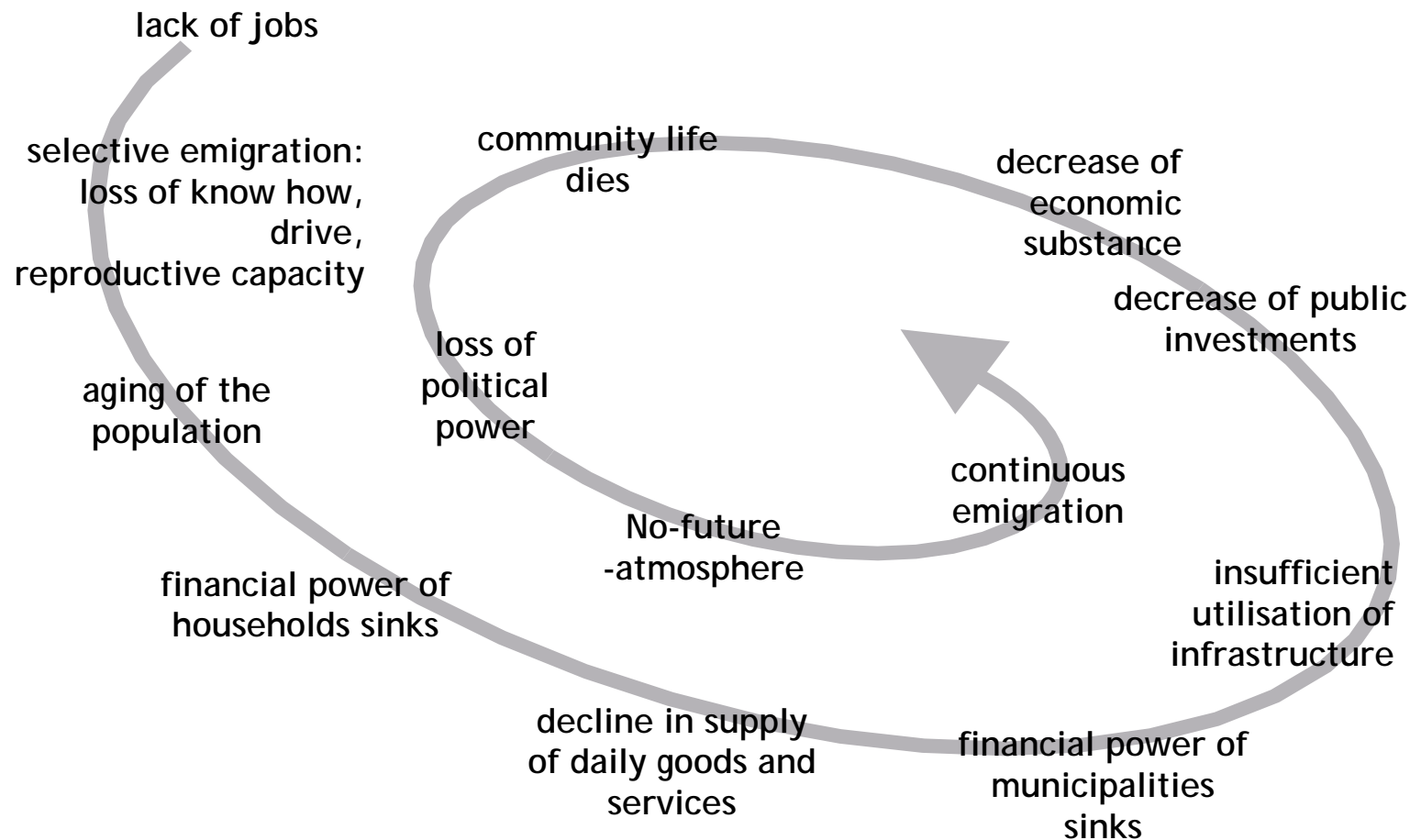
Shrinkage

– the Achilles Heel of (Spatial) Planning

Distribution of structurally weak and structurally strong municipalities in Austria



Negative spiral of development



General features of shrinking areas:

- steady population decline
- high percentage of elderly people
- continuing loss of jobs
- high unemployment rate
- high number of outbound commuters
- private households suffer a loss of purchasing power
- diminished financial power of the public authorities

Soil relevant aspects of shrinkage:

- high rate of abandoned residential buildings and stores
- low building activity on “greenfield sites”
- considerable reserves of building land
- comparatively high number of buildings with low or no market value

Shrinkage

- physical reduction in density
- functional segregation
- social erosion



shrinkage is perceived
but not embraced by spatial planning

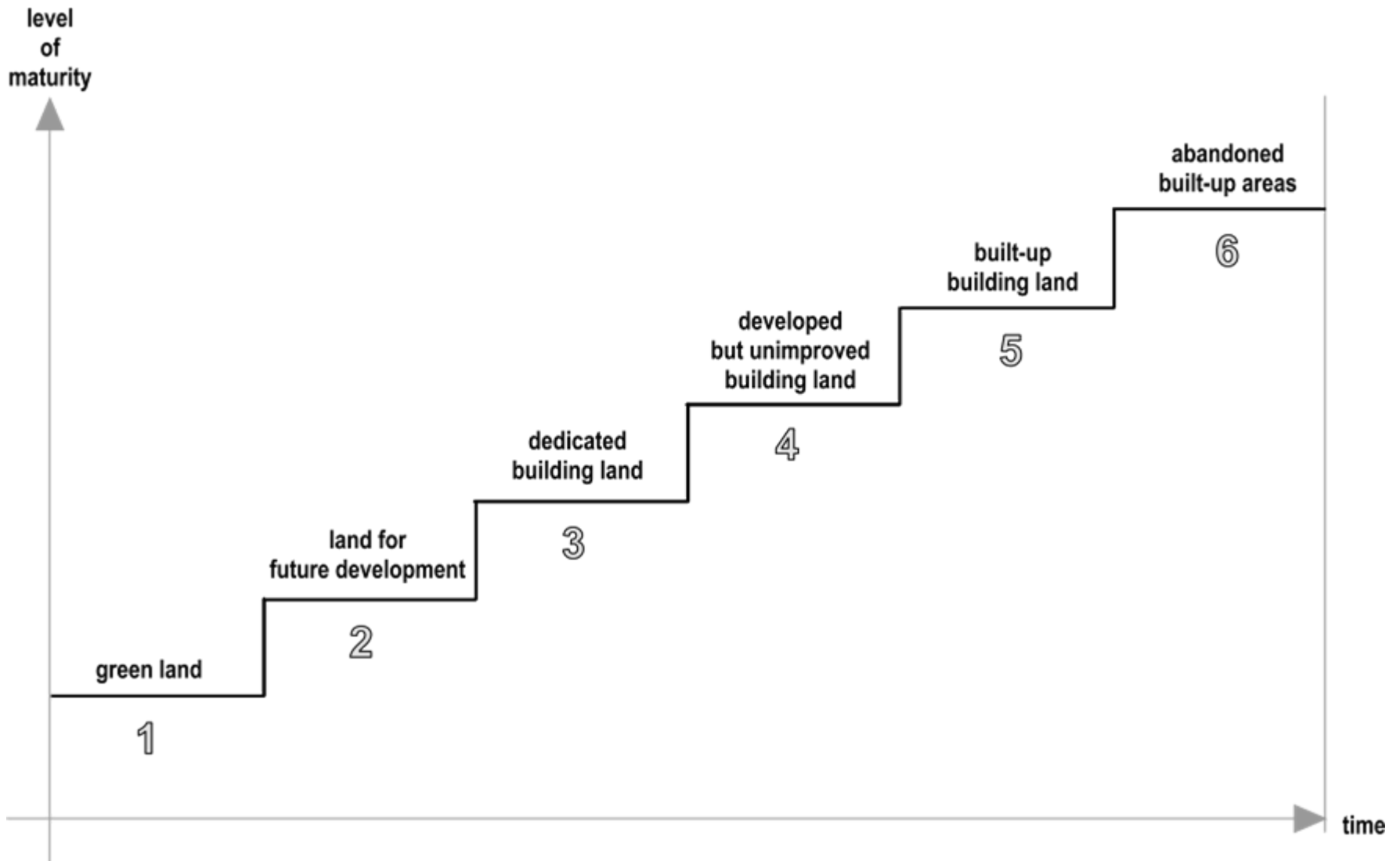
The 3 workpackages of the study

- survey of the basic concepts of spatial planning
- survey of spatial planning policy and practice
- key points of a shrinkage oriented spatial planning system

4th workpackage:

- key points of a shrinkage oriented land use policy

„building land stairway“



Framework for interpretation

- conditions of growth
- rising land prices
- no feedback loop
- focus on “green-fields”



interpretation of the “building land stairway”
in consideration of shrinking processes

Interpretation of the „building land stairway“
under shrinking circumstances

1st step: **green land**



1st step: Green land

Short profile:

- little (less) pressure concerning new uses
- (continuing) price decline
- great losses due to continuing growth of forest area
- minimal growth due to renaturalization of settlement area

Goal: sustaining the goal of quantitative soil protection

Instruments

- specific public relations concerning the relations of quantitative soil protection and great current issues such as „biogenous turning point“, energy turning point, economizing use of financial resources and climate
- creating an awareness for perceiving and appreciating the open cultural landscape by bundling spatial and landscape planning
- higher allotments from the revenue equalization for those „shrinking municipalities“ that can provide evidence for a smaller per capita consumption of green land for settlement and traffic purposes



2nd step:

land for future development

2nd step:

Land for future development



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Short profile:

- “combat zone” between dedicating building land and preserving green land
- little pressure for rezoning
- fall in price

Goals:

- maintaining the goal of quantitative soil protection
- preventing active real estate speculation

Instruments

- raising awareness on the fact that the focus of spatial planning needs to be moved from green fields to built up areas
- improved bundling of the legislation on agricultural property transactions thereby preventing real estate speculation
- obligatory strategic environmental assessment for all dedications of green land to building land as of a certain size (e.g. larger than 2,000 sqm)

3rd step:

Developed but unimproved building land



3rd step:

Developed but unimproved building land

Short profile:

- considerable reserves of building land without appropriate demand
- declining prices for building land
- no intention of the public authorities to develop a certain area

Goals:

- reduction of building land surplus

Instruments

- raising the tax base for dedicated building land
- establishing a statutory time limit for building land dedications in terms of a mandatory rededication to green land if the realization did not take place within a certain time span
- setting a time limit in connection with claims for compensation in case of rededications from building land into green land

4th step:

Not built up but improved building land



4th step:

Not built up but improved building land

Short profile:

- building land reserves that have been improved with streets, water, electricity and / or sewer, but which have not been and will not be built up due to lacking demand
- favourable price level
- „bottomless pit“ for public authorities and supply facilities

Goals:

- speedy development in favourable areas
- transferring the costs of improvement to the respective owners of the building land
- deconstruction of infrastructure in disfavourable areas

Instruments

- dealing with the deconstruction of infrastructure facilities in teaching, research and implementation
- forward the closing of gaps between buildings (= inward bound development) via bonuses (e.g. in Nordrhein-Westfalen 20.000.-)
- charging the „real“ costs of improvement at the moment of constructing the respective technical infrastructure facility
- development of deconstruction plans



5th step:

Built-up building land

5th step:

Built up building land



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Short profile:

- former development areas as well as centers of towns and villages in need of renovation and modernization are facing lack of investment activity
- rising vacancy of residential buildings, industrial and commercial properties and stores
- over capacities concerning social and technical infrastructure
- price decline of old buildings and sites

5th step:

Built up building land



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Goals:

- perceiving processes of decline and stagnation also as a positive effect
- prevention of underuse and vacancy within the settlement area
- the modernization and renovation of the existing building stock takes priority over development activities at the border of the settlement area
- deconstruction and down sizing of over capacities concerning social and technical infrastructure

Instruments

- designing and institutionalizing internal development plans
- establishing accessibility to existing building stocks with the aim of enhancing the quality of living, housing and the surrounding area (for example in terms of climate protection)
- preference of subsidising refurbishment programs over new building activities
- obligatory compensation of sealing activities throughout the removal of impervious surfaces of a similar extent within the settlement boundaries

6th step:

Abandoned built-up areas



6th step:

Abandoned built-up areas

Short profile:

- unused buildings and building parts
- no market for old buildings
- conscious disuse of buildings in danger zones or high-priced buildings at single locations

Goals:

- return of abandoned buildings and built-up areas into the circle of building land areas
- „organized withdrawal“ in extreme locations

Instruments

- creation of land registers for brown fields
- establishing management facilities for abandoned buildings
- establishing of adequate planning instruments for a “controlled deconstruction”

Conclusions

The discussion on land use measures is still too strongly dominated by the perception of expanding settlements. But the time has come to reopen this discussion in the context of areas that are shrinking in terms of regional economy, demography and physical extent!



Thank you for listening!



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