

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

*POLYCENTRIC CITY REGIONS IN TRANSFORMATION -
The Ruhr Agglomeration in International Perspective*

11.06.2015 - 13.06.2015

Zeche Zollverein, Essen, RUHR, Germany

CALL
FOR
PAPERS

GENERAL INFORMATION

Ongoing structural change and continuing transformation processes mean that the reappraisal of the Ruhr region's historic and current spatial development has to become more and more of a strategic priority. Compared to most German metropolitan areas, the Ruhr agglomeration occupies a special position: it is a polycentric region without a dominant core, governed by a multitude of local and regional sectors. At the same time, it is characterised by complex juxtapositions and contradictions in all key areas, including spatial, economical and social development.

Renewal has been on the agenda for decades, and much has been discussed, written about and initiated. It cannot be denied that transformation has been slower than anticipated, that change has not always been happening according to plan and that renewal simply cannot be decreed. A lot has been achieved but maybe not to the same extent as once anticipated.

This transformation process is not even close to completion. The pressure to revitalize is still present; the necessity for a continuous, ongoing renewal still dominates the discussion and is unquestioned by experts. The aim of the process is to have science and industry cooperate in order to develop a macrocosmic approach that includes an international perspective on the region. There is no universal blueprint for how to achieve a successful late-industrial or post-industrial transformation, only certain more or less applicable examples which often vary in the way they approach the problem – partly because of the different parameters. Only very few projects manage to achieve this change through impressive narratives, but more do so by maintaining parallel and incremental work that results in a mutual perspective. This is what the International Building Exhibition (IBA) plans to do in the Emscher Park project. Big narratives have the tendency to end up as nothing but empty promises. However, this does not always have to be the case.

This international congress wants to present strategies for transformation processes and the renewal of polycentric urban areas. It aims to reach the following goals:

- Raising and focusing the level of knowledge on regional transformation processes in post-industrial areas within an international comparative action.
- Raising awareness of possible conflicts and barriers that might occur in polycentric areas and questioning whether they are suited for sustainable development at all.
- Expanding the network “Ruhr 2020+.Hochschulen und Region” to include partners from science and industry in order to connect their expertise in relevant research projects and prepare them for future collaborations.
- Raising the global perception of the Ruhr agglomeration.

A region such as the Ruhr valley – with its diversity of parameters and levels – seems predisposed to lead the international discourse on creating new dialogue-based, integrative regional planning and development strategies concerning the future of polycentric post-industrial urban regions.

The successful exhibition “Emscher Park (1989-1999)” and the project “Europäische Kulturhauptstadt RUHR.2010” (European Capital of Culture 2010) proved that the area is quite capable of developing innovative projects. Furthermore, the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia supported the region with two important initiatives in 2004 and 2007 by sponsoring the “Emscher Landschaftspark” and the “Route der Industriekultur” (Route of Industrial Culture). The strategies devised for “KlimaExpoNRW-RUHR”, “Nachhaltige Metropole Ruhr” (Sustainable Ruhr Metropolis) and for “Wissensregion Ruhr” (Knowledge Region Ruhr) show the future-oriented trend to develop transformation processes for the Ruhr region. In order to achieve a lasting effect and resonance, the conference plans to take unbiased stock of all the previously discussed formats and approaches. An international comparison can be very helpful – not necessarily in order to search for new strategies, but rather to dissect the change of the Ruhr district against a wider backdrop and thus accordingly classify its characteristics.

PANEL 1:

Structural Change & Transformation: Trajectories, Practices, Leitmotifs

This panel aims at reflecting on the past and exploring the current state of older industrial regions from an international, comparative perspective. The transformation of these regions reveals a highly diversified picture, with some cases offering obvious narratives of success, while others are blocked for various reasons. However, nothing changes radically in the short term. Hence, we wish to better understand the longer-term dynamics and trajectories of regional change (measured, for instance, in terms of economic recovery, employment, urban redevelopment, knowledge generation) by presenting cases of transformation that stretch over a timespan of two to three decades.

In so doing, the panel does not wish to uncover what worked, what did not and who was responsible. Instead of searching for the apparently objective 'truth' within and behind regional transformation, the panel is particularly concerned

with the ways in which the regional problem was framed, contextualised and subjected to strategic action and day-to-day practices. This sort of institutional constellation will then be confronted with the more material, persistent and structural properties of regions (the role of property, political fragmentation, shadow coalitions, urban perforation, infrastructure) that may still be at work and which are likely to block change, create inertia and undermine open discourse.

We invite contributors to propose any cases of regions in transition that fit here. We are also interested in learning about cases that were as extensively studied and subjected to political therapy as the Ruhr region without providing the desired success. The interesting questions in this case are how long the present lasts for and whether the newer (rather than the older) industrialised regions alone turn out to be the winners.

Keywords:

Structural Change, Regional Transformation, Innovation, Lock-in, Institutions, Discourse, Political Framing

Panel Supervisors:

Prof. Dr. Markus Hesse (University of Luxembourg)

Prof. Dr. Stefan Siedentop (ILS - Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development)

PANEL 2:

Two-Scale Urbanism – Between Strategic-Regional and Project-Oriented Local Urban Design Approaches for City Regions

In today's urban and regional planning, there are challenges which carry weight at a national or global scale and at the same time can only be solved and imparted to the citizen at a local scale. These include topics such as the development of settlements and the landscape, sustainable mobility and the multi-coded use of infrastructure, especially in post-industrial regions such as the Ruhr valley.

Due to the structural change that has been taking place for decades, the area is still undergoing a transformation process. The connection between the regional level of spatial planning and the specific local urban design projects therefore play a significant role in forming and strengthening a local and regional identity.

The panel deals with two-scale urbanism. On the one hand, this means that the strategic guidelines of the region are developed and respected. On the other hand, specific projects that are implemented locally within the framework of the regional guidelines are considered. The focus of the panel should be on the implementation of these projects. Preferably, papers submitted for this panel should outline the connection between these two levels of planning by referring to a project that can either be in the planning stages or already have been implemented. Thus, one strategic and one spatial level of consideration always exist. In order to outline the connection between the two levels, a structured description of the instruments, strategies and formats existing in the region is of great significance.

Keywords:

Two-Scale Urbanism, Regional Guardrail, Planning Communication, Local Urban Design Projects vs. Regional Strategy

Panel Supervisors:

Prof. Christa Reicher (TU Dortmund University)

Prof. Dr. Hisako Koura (Osaka University)

PANEL 3: Planning Culture – Effective Governance Regimes in Polycentric Metropolitan Regions

Today, polycentricity seems to be the dominant spatial pattern in many metropolitan regions. However, polycentricity is a diverse concept, and we usually distinguish between at least two different forms. Intra-urban polycentric regions used to be dominated by one large city, but strong processes of suburbanisation and metropolitanisation resulted in a more dispersed settlement structure with growing secondary cities. The metropolitan areas of Frankfurt/Rhine-Main and greater Milan are cases in point. Inter-urban polycentric regions such as the Ruhr valley never had a dominant core city, but rather consist of several larger cities that are more or less equal in size. Compared to intra-urban (or formerly monocentric) metropolitan regions, such regions are at a disadvantage, because the regions and the cities therein lack visibility and a clear profile. However, certain advantages may also exist. The absence of a large core city results in a more balanced settlement structure, with ample greenspace and a variety of choices in dwelling and leisure spaces. In more theoretical terms, this can be described as a functional differentiation that may result in synergies for the development of the metropolitan region.

The question is to what extent the region is able to organise and complement its resources so as to ensure positive emergent effects. Effective governance regimes in polycentric metropolitan regions such as the Ruhr

or the Randstad are far from given. Therefore, can polycentric metropolitan regions balance the ambivalence of cooperation and competition in order to create a collaborative advantage? In some polycentric metropolitan areas, several medium-sized cities successfully follow a cooperative strategy in order to balance this disadvantage and join forces. We invite theoretical as well as empirical papers that address the following questions:

- Which kind of governance regimes can we observe in polycentric regions?
- What are the factors for success, and what are the obstacles?
- Can we point to positive examples of functional differentiation or synergetic regional development?
- Which formats and instruments are used in planning and governance?
- What are the implications for the practice of regional planning as well as for regional planning institutions?

Panel Supervisors:

Prof. Dr. Karsten Zimmermann (TU Dortmund University)
Prof. Dr. Uta Hohn (Ruhr University Bochum)

PANEL 4: Industrial Heritage and Identity

This panel discusses the influence of industrial heritage on the construction of regional identities in deindustrialising regions and aims defining the concept of “industrial cultural landscapes”. Its focus is on coal-producing and/or steel-producing regions. The following questions will be discussed within this interdisciplinary framework: what was the motivation and intention behind the production of industrial heritage sites? Who/what were the historical agents in the making of industrial heritage? How has industrial heritage affected the public representation of the region? How do locals perceive and interact with industrial heritage, and how does it affect their personal identity? How has industrial

heritage changed the shape and meaning of urban spaces over time? Can industrial heritage prolong working class identity in the course of deindustrialisation? How does the (post-)industrial representation of the region compete with alternative images in the regional identity repertoire? Which regional specifics – socioeconomic, political, cultural and historical – support or work against industrial heritage? Which features are essential in defining a region as an “industrial cultural landscape”? How have these landscapes been built and preserved? The comparative perspective on regions around the world will raise these as well as new questions in the fields of social and historical sciences.

Keywords:

Industrial Heritage, Regional Identity, “Industrial Cultural Landscape”, Coal and Steel Production, Deindustrialisation

Panel Supervisor:

Prof. Dr. Stefan Berger (Ruhr University Bochum)

PANEL 5: Productive Landscapes

Urban landscapes in polycentric agglomerations, such as the Ruhr region or the Rhein-Main region, are characterised by a patchwork of open spaces and settlement areas. These landscapes are multifunctional und multiproductive.

A variety of different forms of agriculture or horticulture and forestry can be found in these spaces. Moreover, there exists a variety of urban greenspaces, such as traditional parks or private gardens as well as priority areas for ecological protection.

This green infrastructure is essential to ensure the quality of life and attractiveness of urban agglomerations. This

includes climate protection, climate adaptation, rainwater treatment, renewable energies and recreation and healthcare.

A greater share of open spaces and the linkage of these spaces with settlement areas in polycentric city regions provide significant advantages for urban resilience. The sustainable development of these areas into urban cultural landscapes will be a task for the future. This task includes different forms of production and design, and can support the value production chains throughout the whole agglomeration.

Keywords:

Multifunctional und Multiproductive Landscapes, Green Infrastructure, Ecosystem Services, Resilience, New Urban Cultural Landscapes

Panel Supervisors:

Prof. Dr. Jörg Dettmar (TU Darmstadt University)

PANEL 6:

Economic and Social Perspectives

Polycentric city regions are going through transformation processes driven by a number of different cumulative factors. These factors all have in common that long-established economic and social structures are being replaced by new ones, in either an evolutionary or a revolutionary way. Sectors that have dominated for many decades are as much affected by this as is the structure of the population, which is influenced by demographic change or migration.

In the Ruhr region, the unemployment rate and the number of welfare recipients is comparatively high. In terms of economy, the spatial structure of the Ruhr region is very diverse. Many large business parks exist and are typically located on the outskirts rather than in the city centres. These business parks reflect the traditional way of dealing with trade and industry in Germany and the Ruhr region. However, especially in this region, a number of detailed structures such as gap sites exist, which are of great importance to specific economic sectors. These sites are

particularly appropriate for and favoured by creative sectors. The initiative Kreativ.Quartiere Ruhr therefore tries to find suitable sites for artists and creative minds.

Socially speaking, the Ruhr region is a mosaic of smaller and larger city centres with their own identities. Apart from this, the lifestyles in the region are very diverse. Due to the history of the region, the working class is highly developed, while the upper class – which is dominant in other German cities – is less developed.

This scenario results in challenges that can be met in different ways. This panel will investigate the ways in which different means of transformation are particularly successful and which aspects of this can be transferred to other contexts. We call actors from science, economics and politics to present their specified approaches on certain urban regions or in special fields such as health, mobility and new forms of urban economy.

Panel Supervisors:

Rasmus Beck (Business Development Metropole Ruhr)
Prof. Dr. Rolf Heinze (Ruhr University Bochum)

PANEL 7: Mobility and Infrastructure: Sustainable and Energy-Efficient Possibilities for Implementation

Every polycentric region experiences unique conditions in its development, and these have a great influence on the specific manifestation of polycentricity. The rules of the genius loci also apply to these areas: just like any other place, every region has its own unique personality. However, it needs to be questioned whether polycentric regions are sustainable, climate-friendly or energy-efficient per se.

When the Ruhr region developed during the 19th and 20th centuries, today's criteria for sustainability were not under debate. Instead, economic aspects and rapid growth were most important. The result is a region that has by and large been densely built and exploited, and whose image has been defined by the power of many individual interests working within their own spheres of influence.

This concrete reality cannot be adapted overnight to fit such sustainability criteria. Long-term structural change, however, should be seen as a chance to transform the region according to the development principles of the 21st century. A chance exists to revitalise the region according

to forward-looking, climate-sensitive, energy-efficient and sustainable standards. In order to steer this transformation onto the correct path, a fundamentally sustainable model for the future development of the entire urban system across all scales must be created, and this model must be comprehensively observed by all actors.

Nevertheless, the conditions or the genius loci in each of the sub-areas must also be considered: polycentric structures demand regional polyvalent action. Equal values for the whole region decelerate the processes of transformation in some areas, while equalising existing advantages with severe disadvantages. Only in this way can a long-term successful transformation of the region into a – in the best sense of the term – polycentric region be accomplished.

Polycentric region – an awkward keyword and a perfect example of economically driven urban development in the 19th and 20th centuries, or a new type of hype and a guiding principle for sustainable metropolitan regions?

Panel Supervisors:

Prof. Dr. J. Alexander Schmidt (University Duisburg-Essen)

Prof. Dr. Manfred Fishedick (Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment & Energy)

SUBMISSION, DEADLINE & EDITORIAL PANEL

Editorial Panel

The Editorial Panel of the conference consists of the following researchers and practitioners:

Prof. Dr. Markus Hesse (University of Luxembourg)
Prof. Dr. Stefan Siedentop (Research Institute for Regional and Urban Development gGmbH)
Prof. Christa Reicher (TU Dortmund University)
Prof. Dr. Hisako Koura (Osaka University)
Prof. Dr. Karsten Zimmermann (TU Dortmund University)
Prof. Dr. Uta Hohn (Ruhr University Bochum)
Prof. Dr. Stefan Berger (Ruhr University Bochum)
Prof. Dr. Jörg Dettmar (TU Darmstadt University)
Prof. Dr. Alexander Schmidt (University Duisburg-Essen)
Prof. Dr. Manfred Fishedick (Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment & Energy)
Rasmus Beck (Business Development Metropole Ruhr)
Prof. Dr. Rolf Heinze (Ruhr University Bochum)
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Submissions & Conference Fee

An abstract of 600 words or less, including the title, conference panel, author(s), affiliation and e-mail address, as well as a short CV should be sent to **Hendrik Jansen (hendrik.jansen@tu-dortmund.de)**.

Abstracts will be shortlisted by the editorial panel according to the criteria of originality, methodological quality and relevance to the specific panels. All accepted papers have to pay the Conference Fee of 150,00 €.

Deadline for Submissions

All contributions have to be submitted via mail by the **28th of February 2015**.

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