



Master's Thesis

Urban Studies and Planning

The portrayal of the shrinkage phenomenon and the implications it has on urban planning processes in the context of Finland.

Xiao Ling Tuominen

2022

Supervisor:
Giacomo Bottà

Advisor:
Carlos Lamuela Orta

Master's Programme in Urban Studies and Planning

Faculty of Arts

University of Helsinki



Koulutusohjelmasta vastaava tiedekunta – Fakulteten ansvarig för programmet – Faculty responsible for the programme		Tutkinnon myöntävä tiedekunta – Fakulteten som beviljar examen – Faculty granting the degree	
Faculty of Science		Faculty of Arts	
Tekijä – Författare – Author			
Xiao Ling Tuominen			
Tutkielman otsikko – Avhandlingens titel – Title of thesis			
The portrayal of the shrinkage phenomenon and the implications it has on urban planning processes in the context of Finland.			
Koulutusohjelma – Utbildningsprogram – Study programme			
Master's Programme in Urban Studies and Planning			
Tutkielman taso – Avhandlingens nivå – Level of the thesis	Aika – Datum – Date	Sivumäärä – Sidoantal – Number of pages	
Master's Thesis	May 2021	76+1	
Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract			
<p>The past decades have seen the emergence of the shrinkage phenomenon throughout cities leaving urban planners, communities and their administrations perplexed as to what to do next. The phenomenon encompasses complex, interconnected processes which are embedded in economic, demographic and structural changes. However, it is the population decline aspect that is often one of the telltale signs synonymous with shrinkage. Whilst shrinking cities are not something new, it has been gaining widespread attention as it becomes more prominent in urban areas and is no longer just an issue associated with rural areas. With Finland's population forecast expected to decline in the coming decades, the relevance of the phenomenon and its urban planning implications will only become more prominent. Historically and still widely today, a city's success has been connected to its ability to grow, resulting in the ideal that only growing cities are deemed to be successful. Urban planning transpired from the need to spatially manage growth and therefore, has its origins in facilitating for growth. Given the negative implications associated with the phenomenon and its impact on demographics, economy and the built environment of cities, it is often stigmatised and portrayed in a negative light.</p> <p>This research contributes to the knowledge on the shrinkage phenomenon in the context of Finnish urban planning. The study aims to explore the negative portrayal of the phenomenon through understanding the social and structural implications for cities and examining the implications this has on the actions that are being taken by cities to adapt to shrinkage. Specifically, the study involved interviews with urban planners, researchers and other relevant experts across Finland with knowledge on the shrinkage phenomenon and/or urban planning. The results of the study demonstrated that the negative connotation has led to many cities unwilling to openly accept the phenomenon. In turn, this has resulted in denial and the constant desire to strive for growth which has compromised the opportunities available to appropriately plan for the future. The influence of the political realm has shown to be a contributing factor to the stigma surrounding the phenomenon and further reinforced growth aspirations that are not reasonable for many shrinking cities. The prominence of the phenomenon has further fuelled the debate of whether old and current urban planning practices supporting and emphasising growth is the way forward and if existing planning systems are able to (un)plan for shrinkage. Ensuring the importance of quality of life indicators for residents within shrinking cities and the obligation for urban planners to accept shrinkage and plan the future of cities accordingly are key takeaways from the research.</p>			
Avainsanat – Nyckelord – Keywords			
(Urban) shrinkage, shrinking cities, portrayal, adaption, degrowth, social inequalities, quality of life, urban planning			
Säilytyspaikka – Förvaringställe – Where deposited			
University of Helsinki electronic theses library E-thesis/HELDA			
Muita tietoja – Övriga uppgifter – Additional information			

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance support, and cooperation of many other individuals.

In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to:

- My supervisor Giacomo Bottà and advisor Carlos Lamuela Orta for their continuous guidance throughout the past year. Your support, time and advice has been invaluable and driven me to constantly question and improve my work;
- All the research participants who took the time to offer their expertise and knowledge on the research topic. I have learnt so much through this process especially from the reflections, experiences and stories you have shared; and
- My family for their love and support through this process.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Tables	vi
List of Figures.....	vi
Appendices	vi
CHAPTER 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Research significance	4
1.2 Research question and objectives	6
CHAPTER 2: Conceptual Framework	7
2.1 Interconnected processes of growth, economy and urban(isation).....	7
2.2 Shrinkage phenomenon	9
2.2.1 Population decline	11
2.2.2 Economy and the rise and fall of the industrial sectors	11
2.2.3 Migration, mobility and the return of suburbanisation.....	13
2.2.4 Spatial mismatch hypothesis.....	14
2.2.5 Negative urban externalities	15
2.3 Implications of the shrinkage phenomenon.....	16
2.4 The portrayal of shrinkage in an urban planning context	17
2.4.1 Power and city ranking	18
2.4.2 Representation, terminology and discourse.....	19
2.5 Solutions for shrinkage?	20
2.5.1 Smart shrinkage / decline.....	20
2.5.2 Place branding	21
2.6 The link between shrinkage and urban planning	23
CHAPTER 3: Methods	25
3.1 Methodology	25
3.2 Method: Interviews	26
3.2.1 Sampling practicality and bias.....	27
3.2.2 Language.....	29
3.3 Analysis	29
CHAPTER 4: Data	31

CHAPTER 5 – Discussion and Analysis.....	36
5.1 Understanding shrinkage from a practical perspective.....	37
5.1.1 Growth and shrinkage cycles.....	40
5.2 Past decisions presenting challenges today	41
5.2.1 Dependency on single industry/factory	41
5.2.2 The agglomeration of cities and towns.....	43
5.3 Shrinkage as a double ended sword.....	44
5.3.1 Winners and losers.....	45
5.3.2 (Un)acceptance of the shrinkage phenomenon.....	46
5.3.3 Consideration given to shrinkage in urban planning	48
5.4 ‘Strategies’ to overcome shrinkage	49
5.4.1 Focused growth and the ‘ideal’ residents	50
5.4.2 Investing in education.....	51
5.4.3 Finding a new niche and the (re)branding of cities	52
5.4.4 Smart shrinkage	53
5.5 The rural versus urban debate.....	54
CHAPTER 6: Key Findings	56
6.1 Ramifications of scale and interconnected processes	56
6.2 Growth still favoured as the (only) way forward.....	57
6.3 Missed opportunities.....	57
6.4 Denial and its urban planning repercussions	58
CHAPTER 7: Conclusion.....	60
7.1 Limitations to the study	60
7.2 Suggestions for further research	61
REFERENCES	62
APPENDICES	69

List of Tables

Table 1: Interview schedule	33
Table 2: Key discussion areas and objectives of interview groups	35

List of Figures

Figure 1: Interlinkages between conditions, discourse, and policy as well as contextual factors (Adapted from Haase et al., 2017).....	10
Figure 2: Key themes and topics which emerged from the content analysis phase.....	36
Figure 3: Illustration of key words from the interviewee’s description of the shrinkage phenomenon	37
Figure 4: Common understanding of migration patterns at different levels.....	38
Figure 5: Phases in the lifecycle of a city	40

Appendices

Appendix A: Definitions.....	69
Appendix B: Interview Schedule – City and Municipality Planners.....	70
Appendix C: Interview Schedule – Researchers, Consultants and Experts	71

CHAPTER 1: Introduction

Through the urbanisation history of cities and within the field of urban planning, there has been a significant emphasis on growth. As stated by Popper and Popper (2002, p.21) “planning has always had a bias toward growth”. Growth has not only been used as a measurement for ‘success’ but it has also influenced the role which urban planning plays in a city’s future. As stated by Leo and Anderson (2006, p.169) “cities that are growing rapidly, or have grown to a great size, are the “successful,” desirable, and admired ones, while residents of Nowheresville struggle with a diminished sense of self-worth”. In recent decades, the consumption, development, and growth in many cities has occurred at an exponential rate. This has resulted in significant pressure being placed on cities, resources and the environment. Therefore, the compelling and pressing arguments surrounding the social and environmental crises has been further brought into the spotlight (Schneider, Kallis & Martinez-Alier, 2010).

Growth and its many forms play an integral role in the functionality of cities. Growth in terms of population and urban structure is often met with signs of positive economic growth. The importance of economic growth being a crucial driver and dominating politics and policies across the board is nothing particularly new. However, the rapid growth and consumption has contributed to the grounds for critique of widely used old and current practices which support and emphasise growth-oriented development. Whilst some major cities and metropolises are continuing to experience growth and boom, many smaller cities are experiencing the counter effects through shrinkage. Barvika, Bondars and Bondare (2018) describe the shrinkage phenomenon as one of the key threats to the liveability of cities. There is the need to further shift 21st century planning in order to adapt to the impacts of shrinkage such as urban decay and population loss.

The prominence of sustainable development has further emphasised the importance of urban areas. In particular, the need to analyse growth and shrinkage patterns which are occurring within a European context (Reis, Silva & Pinho, 2016). The literature on patterns and trends surrounding shrinkage is considerably less comprehensive compared to the availability of literature on growth patterns. Reis et al. (2016, p.252) attribute this to the spatial patterns resulting from shrinking not being as evident as spatial growth patterns. It is often challenging to identify patterns of urban areas shrinking spatially as a result of population loss.

For urban planners, the role and title that goes along with the job is complex, in that it involves wearing different hats. The job involves a variety of tasks associated with land use, transport, housing, economic efficiency all whilst ensuring the wellbeing of residents (Steele 2009, p.190). Although, the field of

urban planning is typically separated into the public and private realm, Steele (2009) highlights the 'third space', whereby planners operate on a middle ground between the two. Planners play a key role in creating cities for the 'greater good' whilst protecting the interests and wellbeing of residents. Given the complex environment and variety of stakeholders involved in the processes, balancing all these variables remains a constant challenge.

Throughout cities across the world, the shrinkage phenomenon is becoming more prominent and requiring the attention of urban planners and strategies to address the urban issues that it brings to light. Whilst shrinkage has often been discussed within the rural realm, it is evident that it is becoming more prominent within the urban context (Weckroth, Ala-Mantila, Ballas, Ziogas & Ikonen, 2022). It is important to highlight that both rural and urban shrinkage are connected, and the processes are often two-fold, affecting each one another which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

The shrinkage phenomenon is one which is complex, with interconnected processes and influenced by a broad spectrum of factors which tie into the economic, social, political realms and so forth. Given this, the discourse surrounding shrinkage is universally interpreted and defined in so many ways. This is one of the key challenges to shrinkage and what it entails as there is no concrete criteria or solution on how to manage the complex phenomenon (Barvika, Bondars & Bondare, 2018). With that being said, shrinking cities are defined as areas or regions which have experienced a decline in population, employment or economic activity over a period of time (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011).

Urban shrinkage has already proven to be a challenge for many cities, their administrations, governments, and communities. The extent of the urban shrinkage phenomena and its impact on cities across the world is evident. There is up to 13% of urban regions in the United States and 54% in Europe that have suffered from significant population loss in recent years with the number set to increase (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). On a national scale, shrinkage has hit several Eastern European countries such as Hungary, Bulgaria, Latvia, Poland, and parts of east Germany most significantly, which are all deemed as continuously shrinking (Aurambout et al., 2021).

For many western countries, urban shrinkage has stemmed from the move away from industrial production and the concurrent advancements in service and knowledge-based economies (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). Therefore, the shrinkage of local economies and cities often stems from an inability to adapt to the dynamic external conditions in markets and technology resulting from globalisation (Couch, Karecha, Nuissl & Rink, 2005). This is also where the economic implications of shrinkage come into play, given the significant challenges of developing and planning cities when there is financial hardship looming over.

Whilst the reality of shrinking cities is not necessarily something new, it has in recent times gained widespread attention. As the implications are becoming more prominent, this raises questions regarding its repercussions and the possible solutions moving forward. The shrinkage phenomenon has led to many cities requiring to face a great and new planning challenge. Intertwined with the economic and demographic decline, it is evident that former approaches are inadequate in tackling the challenge that many of these cities will face (Audirac, Fol & Martinez-Fernandez 2010, p.55).

Given the emphasis on growth, the shrinkage phenomenon is often portrayed in a negative light and even led to a stigma being associated with cities experiencing decline (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). This has further contributed to the sensitivity and taboo surrounding the topic. I argue that it is imperative to deviate from this mentality and move towards viewing shrinkage as a phase within a city's lifecycle. It is only by doing so, will there be an opportunity to understand the characteristics and factors which contribute to changes in a city's urban development (Rink, Haase, Grossmann, Couch & Cocks, 2012).

Shrinkage with its diverse implications can significantly affect communities and the built environment. This has manifested in various ways such as population loss, lack of employment opportunities, changes to the built environment of a city including vacant and derelict buildings. This raises the question as to whether it really is the phenomenon that is the dilemma or the ramifications which it brings.

Whichever it may be, it has become a significant cause for concern for shrinking cities, especially urban planners and local governments responsible for city infrastructure, services and amenities, given the negative connotation. The complexity and diversity of the shrinkage phenomenon has proven to be a significant challenge. Particularly when the stigma associated with the phenomenon has led to many urban planners and cities hesitant or unwilling to accept that it is occurring. This leads to the question of how urban planners and cities are able to safeguard and plan for the future without firstly providing the much-needed recognition and attention to the phenomenon. Therefore, the dilemma and debate surrounding shrinkage is essentially two-fold. Not only are urban planners and cities concerned with the ways and solutions to address shrinkage but how to do so whilst partly in denial without the encouragement of open discussions on the matter.

The lack of acceptance and hesitancy surrounding the phenomenon continues to cause significant challenges. Without the acceptance that there is a problem at hand, it increases the difficulties for change and progress moving forward. There is the common trend amongst cities that there is the hesitancy to declare shrinkage. This is often met with immense efforts in directing the future planning of cities back towards growth. Sousa and Pinho (2015, p.13) argue that instead of observing shrinkage as an undesirable crisis, it should be viewed from the same perspective as growth; as a pattern of urban

development which consists of different trends including growth, slow growth, stabilisation, and shrinkage.

What is perhaps even more alarming are cities that are experiencing shrinkage, but not reconsidering their strategies and plans for the future. Even if population forecasts depict shrinkage, there is still the aspiration of attracting people to the city instead of catering for a smaller population. To an extent this is also unrealistic given that urban shrinkage, especially when tied to the economic aspect, is occurring considering the lack of study or employment opportunities. However, there are some cities in Germany and the United States that have also managed to make the turnaround back to growth after periods of shrinkage (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012).

Whilst the shrinkage phenomenon within the context of Finland is not at a point of significant severity, it is projected to increase in the coming decades. The phenomenon has also been gaining more media attention in recent years as Finland's population is rapidly ageing along with a trend of decline in younger age groups (Teivainen, 2021). This is further met with many cities across the country, either currently experiencing shrinkage or will to some extent in the coming years. Growth is currently concentrated to four key regions in the mainland consisting of Helsinki, Turku, Tampere and Oulu. Even then, it is projected that by 2040, the population growth in mainland Finland will be within the Uusimaa region with migration playing a pivotal role (Statistics Finland, 2019). Given the gravity of the situation here in Finland, there is the urgency to understand more about the phenomenon and its implications in the field of urban planning whilst there is still the possibility for change.

The following research will analyse the shrinkage phenomenon and the ways in which it is portrayed and understood within the scope of urban planning. Given the future implications of shrinkage, this further highlights the importance of exploring the phenomenon within the Finnish context. It is crucial to understand the negative portrayal of the phenomenon and how to overcome the traditional growth ideals which are entrenched in urban planning. Furthermore, it is also important to explore whether there are implications that arise from the lack of acceptance towards the shrinkage phenomenon and how this plays out in current and future city strategies.

1.1 Research significance

Given the diverse role of urban planners and the volatile environments within a city, the shrinkage phenomenon introduces new complexities to the equation. For cities that are experiencing shrinkage and choose not to accept this, or only behind closed doors, it can create unrealistic visions and plans for the future. It is through exploring the portrayal of the shrinkage phenomenon that there will be the

possibility to unravel the stigma surrounding the phenomenon. In allowing for a more positive understanding and perception towards the phenomenon would this provide the opportunity for acceptance and forthcoming planning for cities accordingly.

The idea of acceptance does not mean that cities experiencing shrinkage should not seek to grow or attract people in the future, however it does mean learning how to live and adapt to shrinkage. It is important that plans for a city's future are also realistic and achievable. For cities that are attempting to attract residents, it is important to understand and correlate these wants with the demographics of those that are wanting and willing to move to smaller cities. Furthermore, those wanting to live in smaller cities or experience 'rural' living must determine whether the shrinkage phenomenon would affect their willingness to move or the attractiveness of the city.

Understanding these questions and the discourse surrounding it is crucial as it is inevitable that not only cities across Finland but also countries across the world will experience shrinkage at some stage. With the term constantly being married to a negative connotation, many cities and municipalities will continue to deny and have reservations on addressing the phenomenon. This will further create issues within cities and the built environment which will become a burden on planners and more broadly in the field of urban planning.

Whilst this is largely an issue for urban planners, there is still the lack of integrating the shrinkage phenomenon debate and its issues into the field of urban planning and urban studies (Haase, Rink, Grossmann, Bernt & Mykhnenko, 2014). This highlights the crucial significance of understanding not only the stigma surrounding the phenomenon itself but also the acceptance and integration of urban shrinkage within the planning field for the future planning and strategic decisions for cities. Furthermore, Reis et al. (2016, p.247) reinforces the importance of planning theory and strategies being able to deal with growth and shrinkage processes simultaneously, both processes as trajectories of urban development.

For many geography studies based on the happiness and liveability of cities, the focus largely becomes centred on perception of life comparisons between large cities and their smaller rural surroundings (Weckroth et al., 2022). However, as highlighted by Weckroth et al. (2022) there are many consequences and downfalls to living in metropolitan centres which can affect ones physical and mental wellbeing as a result of social and economic structures within such cities. It is imperative to break away from the ways of thinking which only depict urban centres and cities as key areas for growth and economic vitality. It is crucial to highlight the importance of liveability and quality of life aspects for residents living within different areas and place this at the forefront.

1.2 Research question and objectives

The aim of the research is to gain a comprehensive understanding into the way urban shrinkage is perceived and portrayed within the field of urban planning from a Finnish context. The research study will explore the ways in which urban planners, researchers and other relevant experts understand the phenomenon and how that is applied in practice. The research aims to highlight any discrepancies in the underlying perceptions towards shrinkage and explore whether this is the case, or if it is the growth ideals being reinforced through old-fashioned urban planning tactics associated with post-war industrial development. It is important to analyse the extent to which a negative perception towards the phenomenon can have on the development and future of urban planning policy and strategies moving forward.

Given the evident gap in research and the importance of understanding the perception and portrayal of the shrinkage phenomenon within the realm of urban planning, the primary research question is as follows:

“How is the shrinkage phenomenon portrayed in Finnish urban planning?”

Furthermore, to guide the aim of the research and primary research question, the following objectives will be used to support the study:

- 1. How is the shrinkage phenomenon understood and the ways it has manifested from a Finnish urban planning perspective?*
- 2. Why is the shrinkage phenomenon associated with a (negative) connotation and stigma?*
- 3. What strategies and actions are being taken by cities/municipalities experiencing shrinkage to adapt to shrinkage?*
- 4. How does the (negative) portrayal of the shrinkage phenomenon impact the strategic planning processes at a municipality level?*

CHAPTER 2: Conceptual Framework

In the following chapter, key theories, themes and ideas from literature will be discussed and analysed. This will provide context and a better understanding of the terms associated with the shrinkage phenomenon and its representation. Furthermore, the following literature will work as a structure and starting point to justify the methods and findings which will be discussed in the later chapters. The conceptual framework will seek to analyse the various interpretations and some of the ways in which the shrinkage phenomenon is understood. For the purpose of this research and study, it will outline a definition of the shrinkage phenomenon for clarity, given the complex discourse surrounding the term. Reckien and Martinez-Fernandez (2011, p.1376) examine three analysis levels leading to the shrinkage of cities: (i) the macro-level involving the corporatisation of industrial cities, (ii) the meso-level identifying the link between sprawl and shrinkage and finally (iii) the micro-level associated with personal changes and behaviour. The literature will delve deeper into the complex interconnected processes which contribute to the shrinkage phenomenon and its implications.

2.1 Interconnected processes of growth, economy and urban(isation)

The future of cities and the discipline of urban planning has been developed on the basis of growth. In recent decades, this emphasis on growth has only become more prominent during periods of rapid urbanisation. This is further supported by Harvey Molotch's notorious statement referring to cities as a '*growth machine*'. Molotch (1976) argues that at the core of any political or economic nature, everything is connected to *growth*. It is imperative to highlight that it is only a select group who are typically rewarded with the benefits ensuing from growth. Beaverstock (2005, p.246) reinforces the role of local elites as major actors, contributing within the financial and social sectors given their knowledge, networks and connections. The primary role of urban planners has always been to plan and manage growth along with the issues that arise with it. However, this is contrary to what many cities all over the world are experiencing today, where it is no longer a question of growth, but a matter of cities shrinking (Hartt 2017, p.2947).

The argument and picture that paints growth as always providing benefits is not so accurate. Sousa and Pinho (2013, p.24) argue the downfalls and prices of growth, which include rapid suburbanisation and urban sprawl often leading to traffic congestion, environmental strain and impacts on nature and wildlife. Schokkaert (2019, p.131) states "if we want a better world, we certainly have to go beyond the market and growth ideology". The influence and dominance of Molotch's reference to cities as urban '*growth machines*' in current day planning is questionable. However, it is still proving to be the unchallenged planning paradigm even in cities experiencing shrinkage (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012).

The changes in population and demographics are a manifestation and effect of globalisation processes. Globalisation has had the ability to stimulate mobility and move people across cities, countries and continents, thereby impacting the growth and shrinkage of cities (Martinez-Fernandez et al. 2012, p. 214). Throughout the lifespan of cities, there have constantly been shifts in growth and population numbers resulting from the movement and restructuring of cities to and from urban areas. This highlights the importance of recognising and considering the shifts in scale occurring within cities (Hartt 2017, p.2947). Audirac, Fol and Martinez-Fernandez (2010, p.53) further argue that the phenomenon and its interconnected processes and manifestations associated with social, economic or demographic factors are driven by globalisation dynamics. Haase, Bernt, Großmann, Mykhnenko and Rink (2016, p.88) dispute the common understanding that economic decline or downturn is a causal factor to shrinkage, highlighting the importance of recognising the demographic and suburbanisation aspects to the equation.

There are many reasons, which contribute to shrinkage and a halt in the growth of cities that will be discussed in the following sections. Notwithstanding the above, there still needs to be a shift away from growth-oriented planning given the inevitable cycles of growth coming to a halt. This is reinforced by Martinez-Fernandez et al. (2016) who argue the importance of policies in addressing and managing a declining population and urgency to deviate from a growth perspective. Furthermore, Lehtinen (2018, p. 43) reinforces the pivotal role of urban planning in supporting and facilitating for degrowth planning and planning for less. Land use planning needs to be utilised in a different manner that can evolve to fit a city's development needs as suppose to the typical function of simply catering for new large scale urban development (Lehtinen 2018, p. 45).

Growth influences many factors and interconnected processes that occur within cities and the wider area. The overarching economic, physical and political themes generally encompass the different aspects which slow or rapid growth can affect (Leo & Anderson, 2006). In regards to the economic aspect, this is commonly one of the most highly regarded and visible 'benefits' which growth delivers. Growth tends to bring new investment and resources which are then relayed back through cities and their economies. This connects back to the physical aspect whereby investment tends to correlate with new development and physical changes to the city or region.

Shrinkage is often associated with the economic aspect as the growth or decline of cities is linked to the economic cycles (Hartt 2017). Hartt (2017, p.2948) highlights that with the economic cycle, there is always a period of growth when there is new technology or innovation which inevitably circles back to a period of decline, reinforcing Kondratieff's economic cycle theory phases of expansion, stagnation and recession. The growth phase only goes so far before it reaches a point where the growth slows down and there is the turnaround which transitions into periods of stagnation or decline. Martinez-Fernandez

et al. (2012, p.215) further supports that it is a natural cycle and at its essence, shrinkage is an inevitable natural phenomenon cities will experience.

Whilst there is the presumption that growth and economic growth resulting from an increase in population go hand in hand as benefactors to one another, this is not necessarily always the case. One of the key misconceptions is that population decline leading to shrinkage results in negative implications on the economy. Although this is typically the case, there are examples which have proved otherwise such as the city of Leipzig, Germany which experienced economic prosperity simultaneously with population loss (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). Many cities and studies have demonstrated that there is not always a positive correlation between population growth and economic growth (Hartt 2017, p.2947). Leo and Anderson (2006, p. 173) argue that declining population rates or slower growth can also be accompanied by more rapid economic growth, contrary to the typical perception. This demonstrates that slow growth or the lack of may not always have the negative implications, which are so broadly understood and perceived within the shrinkage discourse.

2.2 Shrinkage phenomenon

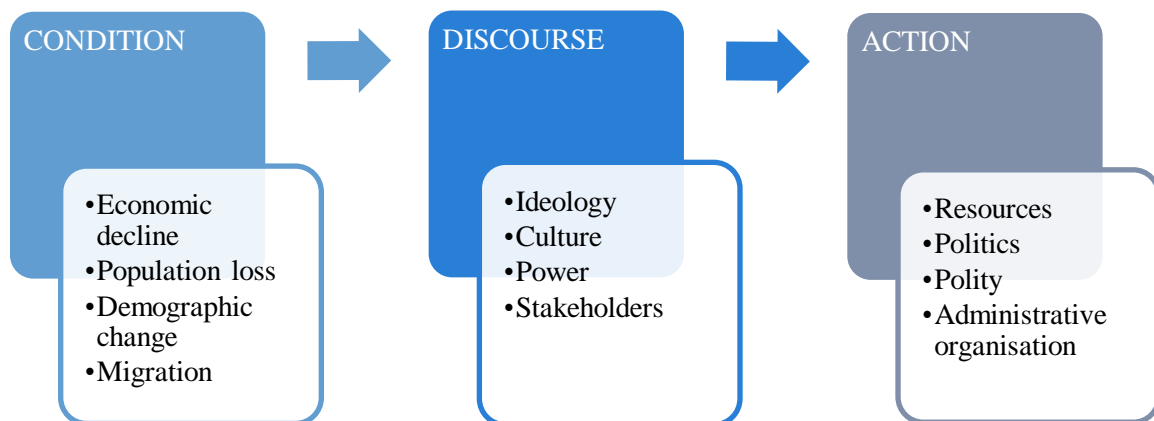
Whilst shrinkage is not something new, it has in the past decades been gaining more recognition and momentum as the driving forces and repercussions of the phenomenon become more prominent in cities and countries across the world. Shrinkage is a structural phenomenon which is embedded in the economic and demographic growth (or lack of) in cities (Wiechmann & Bontje, 2015). It is a complex phenomenon that affects both urban and rural areas and often the two realms are connected to one another. The phenomenon consists of interconnected processes and variables affecting fields across the board, making it difficult to determine any given specific causes or effects it may have.

Wiechmann and Pallagst (2012, p.262) argue that shrinkage and economic decline typically transpires in structurally weak areas. In addition, as cities and towns are all unique and designed in their own way, the effects which shrinkage can have on cities and the rural areas can vary significantly. Haase, Nelle and Mallach (2017) emphasise that whilst the phenomenon is experienced across the globe, the contextual factors behind it differ significantly and no examples can be proven to be identical.

It is important to highlight the difference between urban shrinkage and shrinking cities. Martinez-Fernandez et al. (2012) clarifies the differences between the two. A shrinking city is associated with the defined urban area which is experiencing decline whereas urban shrinkage is the multidimensional phenomenon with processes and effects broader than a simple decline theory (Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2012).

The following section will explore the concept and factors contributing to shrinkage. In addition, identifying the context and discourse in which shrinkage will be defined for the purposes of the research study. Although there are the interconnected processes between urban and rural when it comes to shrinkage, this research will focus on shrinkage within cities. Therefore, it is more appropriate to understand shrinkage with an emphasis on the urban aspect reinforcing the term ‘urban shrinkage’.

Given the complexity of the processes and drivers of urban shrinkage, there is no one simple answer as to what contributes to the phenomenon. It is connected to different aspects of economic, social, political and spatial factors as shown in Figure 1. Provided its multi-dimensional nature and contributing processes, urban shrinkage cannot be explained or predicated through a single theory or factor (Stryjakiewicz & Jaroszewska 2016, p.28). To simplify, urban shrinkage is the result of a combination of these various factors in addition to slow or the lack of population growth. This can be attributed to ageing population, migration regimes and patterns, labour force and work opportunities and other economic factors (Bontje & Musterd, 2012).



*Figure 1: Interlinkages between conditions, discourse, and policy as well as contextual factors
(Adapted from Haase et al., 2017)*

In determining what urban shrinkage is, it is perhaps important to go back to the beginning and explore some of the drivers which have led to the rise of shrinkage. Wiechmann and Bontje (2015, p.4) highlight that contrary to the post-industrial era, the reasons and drivers for shrinkage visible today have differed and found to comprise of one or more of the following factors:

- Economic decline (including deindustrialisation and loss of competitive stance);
- Demographic change;
- Suburbanisation;
- Structural changes (economic and political); and
- Environmental pollution.

2.2.1 Population decline

Economic decline and deindustrialisation leading to a loss of jobs is a key cause of shrinkage in cities. For many European cities, lower birth rates and natural population loss through an ageing population and migration has had a significant effect in contributing to the phenomenon (Wiechmann & Bontje, 2015). Population decline or loss is often used as one of the key indicators to depict shrinkage (Panagopoulos & Barreira, 1978). In saying this, it is not only evident but one of the few quantifiable aspects which can be measured which is why the phenomenon is often associated with population loss. Population and the rate of growth has long been used as a variable for understanding the dynamics and long-term sustainability of cities (Capello & Faggian 2002, p. 183). Whilst population decline is a 'simple' measurable attribute, it is connected to complex processes, consequences and dynamics that vary (Haase, Bernt, Großmann, Mykhnenko & Rink 2016, p.87). Although population growth often results in the growth of urban areas, it is important to note that a decrease in population does not automatically result in urban shrinkage (Sousa & Pinho, 2015). There is also an issue with simply looking at population loss, as there is no universal understanding as to at what rate and time span population decline should occur before it can be considered as shrinkage.

It is important to emphasise that urban shrinkage is a multidimensional phenomenon, which is influenced by many other contributing factors in addition to population decline (Sousa & Pinho, 2015). Haase et al. (2016, p.91) emphasises that many cities experiencing urban shrinkage have three key drivers in common: economic decline, loss in jobs and changes to suburbanisation. It is important to note that these factors are influenced by many overarching aspects including the operation of cities at the national and regional level in addition to the local processes. It is unfortunate that population decline is associated with a negative connotation and viewed as a manifestation of urban shrinkage rather than an opportunity and potential for change (Sousa & Pinho, 2015).

2.2.2 Economy and the rise and fall of the industrial sectors

Urban shrinkage is closely tied with the economic aspect, the rise and fall of industry sectors and the implications this has on cities. Sánchez-Moral, Méndez and Prada-Trigo (2015) outline that the history and evolution of cities is marked by dynamic phases which affect the lives of its citizens and is often linked to technological, economic and political transformations. The growth of many cities and urban areas has been a result of the rise in the industry sectors and economy. In many instances, urban and economic growth relies heavily on the expansion of manufacturing industries. Thus, it is unsurprising that when these industries and companies lose their competitive edge, it results in outmigration and economic and demographic decline (Wiechmann & Bontje, 2015).

Many cities in Europe have had their economies built on specialising in extractive and labour-intensive industries, which has in the past resulted in their growth and a strong economic position. However, it is also these industrial cities, which have suffered the most from their inability to compete and adapt to transformations in technology and activities (Sánchez-Moral et al., 2015). Over the past decades, many cities have experienced a shift from the industrialisation sectors to other industries. Along with it, the importance that these industries once had, has significantly decreased. Many smaller cities have been experiencing the unavoidable process of population shrinkage. This has been caused by economic restructuring meaning these cities lose their importance in economic functions and positioning (Leetmaa et al., 2013). The decline of traditional industries has had severe economic and employment impacts on cities, where very few have managed to recover from (Sánchez-Moral et al., 2015).

Raworth (2017) highlights the significance of supporting and encouraging all economies, from the local through to the global level, to understand that they encapsulate societies of the world. While doing so, it questions the emphasis on growth and growing economies. This raises the possibility of being able to create thriving economies even if they are not growing. Transformations and shifts resulting from economic restructuring in the past decades have occurred quickly. As a result, this has led to the rapid shrinking of many cities, referred to as “shock therapy”, as it has caught many cities off guard (Bontje, 2004; Audirac, Fol & Martinez-Fernandez 2010, p.52).

In some instances, cities that have experienced an accelerated industrialisation process then subsequently experience similar de-industrialisation processes, which have a significant and long-lasting effect on the city (Sánchez-Moral et al. 2015, p.37). Bontje and Musterd (2012, p.153) argue that the problems associated with shrinking cities will only be further aggravated as changes to the economy continue to occur. For example, this includes the shift from industrialisation sectors to more creative and knowledge-based economies. The areas in which shrinkage occurs because of these factors will be most recognisable in smaller, peripheral cities or ones that have experienced extensive and rapid growth as a result of an industry.

Schneider et al. (2010, p.512) supports the argument for sustainable degrowth, a transformation and downscaling of human production and consumption of resources, all whilst supporting the wellbeing and ecological aspects for the short and long term. A key aspect to sustainable degrowth is the decrease in gross domestic product (GDP) with less large-scale production and consumption activities. With many of these avenues and more radical changes being explored and gaining momentum, it is difficult to not highlight the move away from economic growth being the dominating paradigm. Furthermore, Johnson, Hollander & Whiteman (2015, p.62) argue that for shrinking cities, a decrease in traditional forms of investment, paired with new activity could present the best use of funding and quality of life for residents moving forward.

2.2.3 Migration, mobility and the return of suburbanisation

Population decline is not only driven by natural changes to demographics and population, but it is also significantly influenced by migration patterns (Haase et al. 2016, p.92). The link between the de-industrialisation of cities, suburbanisation and shrinkage is also evident. De-industrialisation often leads to the loss of jobs and people moving away from the inner-city areas resulting in suburbanisation, therefore connecting back to the shrinkage of urban areas (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez 2011, p.1377; Sánchez-Moral et al., 2015). Furthermore, Upadhyay et al. (2015) emphasises that the pressing issue of climate change and other environmental changes can also influence movement patterns and behaviours amongst people.

Migration and mobility have played a key role in the processes contributing to urban shrinkage. Migration trends and patterns have demonstrated the movement between rural and urban areas with emphasis on the rural to urban migration. A key-contributing factor to population decline in many shrinking cities is through outmigration and mobility patterns. This is seen in the form of people moving from rural areas or smaller cities to larger urban areas. Hoogerbrugge and Burger (2021) highlight the reason for this as being the appeal of city life driven by the employment opportunities combined with diverse amenities and consumption opportunities. All these factors play a role when it comes to the perception of what constitutes an attractive place to live. Nonetheless, Hoogerbrugge and Burger (2021) also argue that whilst larger urban cities can provide more opportunities, rural environments can better support certain social groups and demographics which they can thrive in regardless.

Migration and mobility also raises the theme of choice and personal preferences of individuals. Although many are willing to choose the city life over smaller cities and rural areas, studies have shown that people are not necessarily happier living in larger cities (Hoogerbrugge & Burger 2021, p.2). Therefore, this connects back to the question of why people move and what cities and urban areas can provide that rural and smaller towns cannot. Whilst there is always the emphasis on choice, this is a questionable presumption as to why people really choose to move or if there is a choice in it at all. All processes, especially migration and the choice to move or leave a city, create inequalities and produces winners and losers, which tend to favour the privileged and advantaged social groups.

For upcoming generations, the choice of where to live is influenced by their future. Many smaller shrinking cities lack opportunities for not only education and employment but also way of living and sense of place that it can foster and provide. Cities that have universities or tertiary education facilities, tend to attract new residents from younger age groups that move to receive an education (Rink, Haase, Grossman, Couch & Cocks 2012, p.163). The influence of this in cities is pivotal as it can often lead

to an influx of residents in the younger demographics (Rink et al., 2012). Jaroszewska and Strykiewicz (2016) highlight that given the significance of the decisions of the younger generation as an uncontrollable factor, this further fuels the idea and importance of choice.

2.2.4 Spatial mismatch hypothesis

Kain (2004) suggested the spatial mismatch hypothesis (SMH) as a way to illustrate poverty and unemployment in America amongst African Americans. The SMH demonstrated that the housing, education and employment opportunities amongst other factors did not correspond with what was required within an urban area (Kain, 2004). The SMH origins are in the effects of segregation and discrimination in the housing market, which was later expanded to other important topics such as residential choices, housing prices and education within inner city areas (Kain, 2004). Fan (2012, p.153) states “spatial mismatch is embedded in social structures and labour market processes”. Urban sprawl, which contributed to the geographical growth of many cities, has further increased the spatial mismatch of job opportunities and where people can move or afford to move (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011).

Reckien and Martinez-Fernandez (2011) confer that the processes contributing to shrinkage lead back to a mismatch of spatial supply and demand. This is often discussed and portrayed through the SMH which offers a theoretical framework to provide an explanation for the economic problems being experienced. The SMH highlights the implications of employment opportunities, which can arise through economic restructuring and residential segregation (McLafferty & Preston 1996, p.421). It is further emphasised through this hypothesis, the drastic implications that restructuring and changes have, specifically on marginalised or disadvantaged groups based on factors such as race and poverty (McLafferty & Preston, 1996). However, Hu (2015, p.33) reiterates that access to employment is influenced by factors beyond spatial change, including economic and demographic changes and it is crucial to separate the implications of spatial and aspatial change.

Furthermore, the SMH proposes that by disconnecting the spatial boundaries between jobs and housing this will then provide the opportunity to improve the economic prospects of the disadvantaged (Hu, 2015). There are three strategies which are commonly used as solutions to spatial mismatch; attempts to bring jobs back to declining neighbourhoods, relocate people closer to jobs and improving mobility (Gobillon, Selod & Zenou, 2007). Mobility strategies are often viewed as a straightforward solution to the implications of spatial mismatch, through making access to existing jobs easier as opposed to policy strategies or other solutions (Ihlanfeldt & Sjoquist 1998, p.883; Gobillon et al., 2007). This emphasises the role in which jobs have in people’s decision of where to live but also highlights that moving people to jobs is an ‘easier solution’ and alternative to spatial mismatches.

2.2.5 Negative urban externalities

Cities are centres of continuous dynamic processes, which can result in positive and negative externalities. Although not the primary cause, shrinkage can lead to the exacerbation of many social issues such as segregation, poverty and the polarisation of social classes (Haase, Athanasopoulou, & Rink, 2013). This also raises many other issues associated with the built environment and infrastructure, resulting in direct implications for urban planners and the field of urban planning. Henderson (1986, p.47) discusses the economies of scale and the benefits and increases in productivity which arise when the placement of resources, labour and other key factors match the size of the city.

A statement which supports the notion of growth as a successful ideal is premised on positive externalities and larger growing cities receiving greater benefits (Chen 2002, p.532). Contrary to the common benefits of larger growing cities, it also brings about negative externalities, which include many planning challenges faced today. As supposed to continuing to attract and plan for growth in cities, these negative externalities propose the idea of an optimal sized city (Chen 2002; Henderson 1986).

One of the most obvious and key factors contributing to shrinkage is population decline, which is constantly highlighted as a key issue and negative implication. However, many of the negative environmental and social externalities including pollution, traffic and congestion and many other social problems are only further exacerbated when population increases (Capello & Faggian 2002, p. 183). This raises the question of whether urban shrinkage driven by population decline is something negative and why it is viewed in such a manner. It is often the case that these negative externalities of living in larger cities such as congestion, pollution and so forth can further exacerbate feelings of stress or a decrease in quality of life amongst residents (Hollander 2011, p.139).

Economic growth and globalisation are twofold and present contrasting arguments questioning the true intentions and the ramifications across social classes. On one hand, globalisation can exacerbate the inequalities and further polarise an existing unequal society, but it can also decrease inequalities in developing economies through the growth of certain industries requiring lower skilled workforces (Mills 2009, p.5). Dynamic externalities associated with knowledge spillovers also contribute significantly to driving economic growth (Romer, 1986; Chen 2002, p.531). Chen (2002, p.532) highlights that localisation and urbanisation are key factors in the production of positive externalities. Given this, there is the common understanding that larger cities also contribute and yield greater benefits. Many cities that experience this concentration of knowledge and such externalities highlight

the significance of the communication sectors, which are most often evident in cities (Chen 2002, p.531).

2.3 Implications of the shrinkage phenomenon

The impacts of the shrinkage phenomenon reach far and wide influencing the built environment within the city itself, often manifesting in vacant buildings, houses and areas. The multidimensional complexities associated with the phenomenon affects the urban development of cities including housing, economy, labour markets and physical infrastructure, usually at the local scale (Haase et al. 2016, p.95). It is often these repercussions, which become determining factors in the way residents feel about their neighbourhoods and city (Greenberg & Schneider, 1996; Hollander 2011, p.132). Additionally, shrinking cities can often lead to a decrease in housing prices and as a result, the neighbourhood quality and stability can decrease (Newman et al. 2018, p.4).

Although economic change and restructuring is one of the leading drivers of shrinkage, many other factors can influence the effects on the city. For some, the implications of urban shrinkage are less severe or not at all given the importance of the city on a global scale. Take some of the first suburbs in Paris, whilst they had experienced tremendous economic restructuring during the 1960's, these cities benefited from their proximity to the capital and the global economy rather than being thrown into turmoil (Audirac, Fol & Martinez-Fernandez 2010, p.53).

A decrease in the population of a city brings to light many issues, frequently associated with the economic problems as a result of lost income, investments and capital. However, it is just as important to recognise the social problems associated with a decrease in population. Existing social issues, such as divisions amongst groups and inequalities are more often than not, further intensified following the shrinkage of cities (Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2016). Historical social divisions and problems still endure which only further complicate the intentions and policies used to adapt and combat shrinkage (Audirac, Fol & Martinez-Fernandez 2010, p.53).

Whilst Newman et al. (2018) Newman et al. (2018) Newman et al. (2018) Newman et al. (2018) Newman et al. (2018) Newman et al. (2018) Newman et al. (2018) Newman et al. (2018) Newman et al. (2018) Newman et al. (2018) raises the point that shrinking cities can lead to unstable or even unsafe neighbourhoods, given lower socioeconomic classes moving in, it accentuates the inequalities through society. The better question or matter to address would be highlighting that those fortunate enough are able to have the choice of relocating to a more 'ideal' location. This is further reinforced by Rhodes and Russo (2013) where vacancies and the abandonment of buildings can question neighbourhood

confidence, property values, amenities and services, producing a less attractive place for investors and residents. Therefore, it is crucial that attention is given to the social dynamics aspect to shrinking cities as it can exacerbate issues of poverty, inequality and social exclusion amongst the vulnerable and disadvantaged (Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2016).

2.4 The portrayal of shrinkage in an urban planning context

The portrayal of the shrinkage phenomenon and the surrounding discourse plays a pivotal role in its interpretation within the field of urban planning by planners, stakeholders and the community. Haase et al. (2016, p.88) argues that urban shrinkage is a phenomenon that continues to be misunderstood in terms of its expression and representations. This is because of the complexity of the phenomenon and the lack of understanding as to what it truly constitutes (Haase et al., 2016). As such, urban shrinkage is typically portrayed or understood in a negative light. Whilst there are many reasons for this, the emphasis of growth in planning and societies perceptions and stigma surrounding the term ‘shrinkage’ are also contributing factors.

The negative connotation associated with shrinkage can be attributed to its unfavourable outcomes such as the loss of services, taxes and other incomes, labour force, investments and capital (Bontje & Musterd 2012, p.157). Given the emphasis on growth as a measurement for success, it comes as no surprise that this notion transfers directly onto the planning of cities. Cities that become stagnant or experience shrinkage are often frowned upon and perceived in a negative manner. Population decline is constantly reinforced as a driver to the shrinkage phenomenon, a concept that is supported by funding and regulation ideals (Hollander, 2011). Instead of focusing on population decline, the spotlight should be shifted as to whether population decline affects the quality of life for those living in the city (Hollander, 2011).

For many cities, accepting the fact of shrinkage is a difficult prospect given the conceptions surrounding the phenomenon. Haase et al. (2017) reinforces that shrinkage can be an unpleasant and difficult topic to comprehend for many, given the fate that lies with the many cities experiencing shrinkage. For smaller cities, they are often plagued by the thought of becoming one of the cities or places that ‘don’t matter’, essentially left behind with a lack of opportunities and prospects (Rodríguez-Pose, 2017).

One explanation for the hesitancy to accept the move away from growth-oriented planning is not only the sensitivity of shrinkage but also the political and psychological factors surrounding it (Popper and Popper 2002, p.22). The phenomenon is seldomly acknowledged within the field and even more so publicly. The ways in which factors are associated with certain ideals can be powerful and persuasive

in influencing the perceptions of planners and others in the community (Cozens, Hillier & Prescott 2001, p.244).

2.4.1 Power and city ranking

The on-going power struggle and competition between smaller and larger cities is nothing new. Where a city ranks on a global, national or local scale is a factor, which gains significant attention from all sectors including researchers, policy makers, governments and administration (Wang et al. 2020, p.2). City ranking highlighting their importance is an evolving phenomenon, which is fuelled by the city's surrounding economic and political environment (Saito & Thornley, 2003). Population is often used as one of the determining factors that contribute to economic structure and performance, reinforcing why growth in all its forms is perceived as imperative (Wang et al., 2020). Focus is often directed towards larger cities due to their comparative advantage over smaller cities which is facilitated through labour, infrastructure, economic activity, knowledge and innovation (Rodríguez-Pose 2017, p.6). On the other hand, smaller cities and towns are often neglected through the academic and political discourses albeit they contribute an integral part in rural economies (Courtney et al., 2007; Leetmaa et al. 2013, p.147).

Notwithstanding, the negative implications and perceptions associated with shrinkage, it is not to say that shrinking cities do not experience any economic potential or are plagued by negative repercussions (Rodríguez-Pose 2017, p.25). A study that examined the quality of life of residents in growing and shrinking cities demonstrated that contrary to mainstream perceptions, residents of growing cities were no happier than residents living in shrinking cities (Hollander, 2011). It is important to reiterate the role of urban planners and their responsibility in ensuring the quality of life and wellbeing of residents (Steele, 2009).

Whilst usually not as economically competitive as other large urban centres, smaller cities and towns have the capacity for locally based development opportunities through local culture and social capital (Leetmaa et al., 2013). Taubenböck et al. (2019, p.13) further argues that there needs to be a shift away from ranking cities which prioritise the generation of statistical units such as population numbers. Instead, there needs to be the move towards other key considerations such as the better management of cities and living environments from a planning perspective (Taubenböck et al., 2019). In addition, Leetmaa et al. (2013) reinforces the importance of smaller cities and the role they contribute in regional, national and international networks, despite their peripheral locations compared to urban centres.

Many factors contribute to how a city is ranked or portrayed. This includes, but is not limited to, the physical built environment, population, economic power and people's perception of a place or city (Taubenböck et al. 2019, p.2). The statistical factors which generate numeric and quantitative results

such as population and economic growth figures, make it is easier to link these factors to shrinkage. It is straightforward to recognise trends and patterns in numeric results compared to qualitative factors such as perceptions, opinions and feelings. With the common understanding that bigger is better, similar ideologies also apply to cities and urban planning. Although cities vary from megacities through to small rural towns, the size of a city has a crucial role in shaping the quality and living conditions of its residents (Capello & Faggian 2002, p.182).

2.4.2 Representation, terminology and discourse

Whether it is the representation in media or literature, the idea of growth is something that is portrayed in a positive light. It can be argued that the positive portrayal of growth is credited to the direct and immediate benefits, which it brings, and the lack of acknowledgement to the consequences that rapid growth can foster (Leo & Anderson 2006, p.171). It is often a lot easier to justify and accept the benefits, which something may bring, whilst failing to recognise the future implications and accepting that the ‘greater good’ outweighs the negative. Hollander (2011, p.129) highlights that policy makers and urban planners tend to have a negative view towards population decline, which is further reinforced through funding and regulations.

The terminology and discourse surrounding the shrinkage phenomenon and its interconnected processes and drivers has long been a point of confusion. Whilst some cities have accepted the idea of shrinkage behind closed doors, terminology and branding has played a key role in the approach, which cities take as the next step. Haase et al. (2017, p. 98) highlights the attempts to brand or describe shrinking cities in a positive light, despite the somewhat lagging acceptance of shrinkage in political and public environments. This comprises of using ‘positive’ terminology to describe these cities such as “legacy cities, cities in transition or even cities re-growing smaller” (Haase et al. 2017, p.98).

The perceptions and understanding of individuals are subjective, influenced by common and popular understanding, stigma and ideologies, which also need to be taken into consideration. One of the factors contributing to the shrinkage stigma is pride and the way people feel towards their city or town. Hudson (2005) highlights that in many industrial towns, employees and residents contributed to the growth and prosperity experienced during the boom periods. Following drastic change, it is often difficult to accept especially when there is a mental connection to the place or what it once was. Rao, Nautiyal, Maikhuri and Saxena (2003, p.178) highlight the significant variation amongst individuals when exploring perceptions and the way people feel or what they value. Furthermore, gender can also contribute to perceptions, where a study demonstrated that men tend to favour economic opportunity whereas women valued enhanced living conditions (Rao et al., 2003).

Although the shrinkage phenomenon has been stigmatised and is a somewhat sensitive topic within planning discourse, countries such as the United States and Germany have taken a more proactive approach in addressing and understanding the phenomenon (Wiechmann & Pallagst 2012, p.262). In Germany for instance, it was not too long ago when the topic of shrinkage was still politically taboo and disregarded by policy makers. Today, the country has taken a completely different approach in not only accepting that the phenomenon exists but also measuring how to address it.

With constant discussion on the ways to adapt to the impacts of shrinkage, it has led to stabilising the housing market and the integration of urban development strategies in derelict areas (Wiechmann & Pallagst 2012, p.265). Notwithstanding the above, the commonly used term for shrinkage in the German language paints a different picture in that it translates to ‘structural change’. Lang (2012, p.1748) states that shrinkage is often discussed in diverse perspectives from either a ‘doom’ or ‘innovation’ mindset. This further emphasises that the interpretation and discussion surrounding the phenomenon is very much connected to the terminology used.

2.5 Solutions for shrinkage?

As established, shrinkage is an inevitable phase within the lifecycle of cities, although it can be brought on and influenced by other external factors (Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2016). Therefore, it is important to learn to adapt and live with the phenomenon rather than seeking a ‘solution’ to shrinkage. As stated by Couch et al. (2005), it is the cities that can adapt to shrinkage and the structural changes that will benefit in the future. With that being said, the idea of ‘smart shrinkage’ and ‘city rebranding’ are two approaches that are commonly discussed in literature as a response to shrinkage.

2.5.1 Smart shrinkage / decline

The term smart shrinkage or decline often comes up within the discourse surrounding the shrinkage phenomenon. Popper and Popper (2002, p.23) define the smart decline approach as “planning for less – fewer people, fewer buildings, fewer land uses”. While broadly contributing similar ideas or approaches to shrinkage, it is often described in different ways from smart decline and planning for less to the rightsizing of cities (Popper & Popper, 2002). Smart shrinkage is a planning approach to tackle the increasing problems associated with urban shrinkage and shrinking cities (Newman et al., 2018). The approach emphasises certain land uses, whilst preserving the quality of life for those living and working within the city (Johnson, Hollander & Whiteman, 2015).

Newman et al. (2018, p.2) discusses that instead of forcing new development in vacant and declining areas, cities should prepare themselves for the future through ‘rightsizing’ by making the best use of existing vacant lots. Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that planning through smart shrinkage approaches and new alternatives requires the commitment to leave behind assumptions of growth being the only way forward (Popper & Popper 2002, p.21). Instead of focusing on population decline, the attention should be shifted to decipher whether the decline in population affects the quality of life within cities, which is something yet to still be determined (Hollander, 2011). Cities exploring the idea of smart shrinkage and rightsizing operate under a key assumption that it is possible to have high quality of life, notwithstanding a decline in population (Hollander 2011, p.130).

Turok and Mykhnenko (2008) outline the concept of ‘resurgent cities’ that have overcome shrinkage and reverted to positive growth. Three reasons are used to highlight why some cities are able to do so, (i) geography, (ii) innovative milieus and (iii) urban resilience (Turok & Mykhnenko, 2008). It is important to note that whilst some can revert to growth, although quite uncommon, it is crucial for cities and municipalities to take proactive approaches.

For some cities experiencing shrinkage that decide against a regrowth approach, the long-term strategic plans emphasise an attractive urban core, the reduction of land uses and a stable population (Wiechmann & Pallagst 2012, p.270). This approach is facilitated through establishing a stronger, more diverse economic foundation in other industries such as technology, education, culture and tourism (Wiechmann & Pallagst 2012, p.273). For some shrinking cities, being involved in the local development, generating resources and establishing networks have led to an upturn in their economic and social initiatives and development for the future (Sánchez-Moral et al., 2015). However, it is also noted that this can also lead to controversy for some post-industrial cities. In attempts to explore other avenues such as tourism and culture, there is the possibility of disputes when individuals hold onto the idea of old industries and practices (Sánchez-Moral et al. 2015, p.50).

2.5.2 Place branding

Place branding or rebranding plays a powerful role for many cities in their ability to enhance their image and reputation (Acharya & Rahman, 2016). The enhanced competition amongst cities has only been further fuelled by significant economic, technological, demographic and political changes as a result of globalisation (Acharya & Rahman 2016, p.290). Johnson et al. (2015, p.62) argues that when faced with urban shrinkage, more specifically as a result of a decline in population, leaders and the community typically have three options; public redevelopment, take no action or smart shrinkage. Redevelopment is a commonly used planning strategy for cities facing shrinkage as it is anticipated to not only improve the economic condition of an area through investment but also through enhancing the physical outlook

of the city (Hollander 2011, p.130). For cities attempting to rebrand, there is the common trend of this occurring through new developments and changes to the physical built environment of the city. Most notably, this can take place through flagship and iconic developments which were a particularly popular tactic in the 1980's and essentially an expression of rebranding (Smyth, 1994; Ortiz-Moya 2015, p.34).

For cities experiencing shrinkage, a common side effect is vacant and abandoned buildings, which often lead to increased crime rates thus influencing the perception of an area by the wider community (Greenberg & Schneider, 1996). Reckien and Martinez-Fernandez (2011, p. 1393) argue that people and businesses often make decisions based on the attractiveness and appearance of a location. This tends to be a disadvantage to shrinking cities as they are often inundated by old structures, unused and derelict buildings. However, it is also crucial to note that this should also be viewed in a positive light, as these areas are also places of opportunity to be transformed again. In discussing redevelopment, it is essential to highlight the viability of regeneration tactics through large-scale development. Especially when taking smart shrinkage into consideration and the idea of planning for less, not more. In the case of smaller shrinking cities, there is also the question of financial ability to do such developments.

For cities experiencing shrinkage, the process of rebranding the city can provide glimmers of hope or a new beginning. Reckien and Martinez-Fernandez (2011) highlight that industrial cities should not conform to their traditional models and instead welcome new developments and opportunities. There is the trend of many industrial cities looking into developing their economy in other industries in order to attract people, such as through tourism and other specialised niches. Through a case study analysis of small towns, Leetmaa et al. (2013) found that despite experiencing urban shrinkage, many smaller towns were able to overcome their locational disadvantage through establishing specialised economic niches. This has been particularly successful for cities throughout the 2000's (Leetmaa et al., 2013). Bottà (2020) highlights an example of this through the significant role that music played in the evolution of industrial cities, especially during deindustrialisation where it brought people together and created a positive space.

Many niches are dependent on the existing culture and activities available and whether they are able to use them to their advantage to revitalise the city. This is further supported by making suitable investments to not only strengthen the city as an attractive residential and business destination but also as an alternate location to larger urban centres and cities (Leetmaa et al. 2013, p.163). The appearance and branding of smaller cities is key given the role and influence it can have within the context of the tourism industry (Acharya & Rahman 2016, p.290). For cities going through the process of rebranding, it has led to the implementation of many different urban regeneration initiatives. With the aim to establish and sell a new way of life through renewing the city, the rebranding of cities typically aim to

depict an image of “vibrancy, cultural life, leisure and new economic possibilities” (Ortiz-Moya 2015, p.33).

However, with rebranding and urban regeneration tactics, the underlying agenda of future growth typically comes back into play with population growth as a common goal. Ortiz-Moya (2015) reinforces that the regeneration agenda, whilst has successfully brought a decaying city back to life in the example of Manchester in the United Kingdom, has come with its challenges. The negative implications are visible given its pro-growth policies such as high costs, polarisation of inequalities and social exclusion which are still issues requiring attention (Ortiz-Moya, 2015). Nevertheless, urban regeneration initiatives have the ability to restore cities that were once shrinking and provide a second chance in hope for future growth (Ortiz-Moya 2015, p.40).

2.6 The link between shrinkage and urban planning

Martinez-Fernandez et al. (2016) highlights that there is still a disconnect between shrinking cities and urban planning. This is attributed to the fact there are no determined approaches, through policy and action that have been identified or implemented for shrinkage (Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2016). In addition, urban planning is still largely fixated on the traditional planning frameworks and approaches catering for growth. For many cities in Finland, including the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, the field is undermined by old school, traditional planning approaches which are nor innovative or new and continue to implement timeworn planning approaches (Joutsiniemi, Vaattovaara & Airaksinen 2021, p.844).

Haase et al. (2016, p.99) further argues that a one size fits all approach to dealing with urban shrinkage is neither available, feasible or desirable. Given that cities are unique in their own way, shrinkage also differs significantly from city to city which require urban planning practices and strategies tailored to the place (Bontje & Musterd 2012, p.158). Popper and Popper (2002, p.22) emphasise the planning fields bias towards growth given managing growth has always been one of the key roles of urban planners. As a result of this, for many planners, this move away from growth-oriented planning can be a somewhat uncomfortable or even unwanted transition.

Albeit loosely connected to the social movement of degrowth, urban shrinkage can be associated with the topic of ‘degrowth planning’ to spatialise and facilitate for the degrowth movement (Xue 2021, p.10). Xue (2021, p.10) argues that no matter what trajectory cities are experiencing whether that may be growth, stagnant or shrinkage, it is key that urban planning is used as a tool to facilitate for such futures. It was only a decade ago in 2012 that academic and policy makers finally declared the

importance of the phenomenon, recognising not only its importance but its many dimensions (Haase et al. 2016, p.88). This not only demonstrates the very new approaches and lack of acceptance to the phenomenon but the trend of using traditional planning approaches which are largely growth oriented for a contrary problem.

Whilst cities and municipalities are often unable to reverse the shrinkage or loss that has already occurred, the use and adoption of strategies favouring smart growth has become one of the strategic ways to readjust to the phenomenon (Panagopoulus & Barreira 1978, p.285). This further supports the importance of adaptation and for local governments and urban planners to have the ability to make these decisions to recognise when a shift in strategy or policy implementation is required. Puustinen, Mäntysalo, and Jarenko (2017, p.84) reinforce the role of Finnish urban planners and their responsibility in upholding public interest as well as overcoming conflicts amongst different stakeholder groups.

Behind closed doors, there is the constant power relation and dynamic dispute being exchanged amongst institutions and different stakeholder groups, affecting future development and plans (Joutsiniemi et al. 2021, p.838). Puustinen et al. (2017, p.86) further reinforces the complex and evolving role of planners and their ability to serve and protect public interest, especially amongst competing variables, political approaches and philosophies. Although urban planning should be done from the perspective of simply planning a city, it is difficult to separate factors such as political tensions and powers at play within the field. Joutsiniemi et al. (2021, p.838) highlights that changes in the past decades to public governance approaches in Finland have only brought the focus of planning from problem solving to a world of political debate. It is important to note that the role of urban planners through the whole planning process is fundamental in cases where shrinkage prevention has proven to be successful (Barvika et al. 2018, p.138).

CHAPTER 3: Methods

Given the nature of the research topic and objectives, a qualitative research approach and methods offered a comprehensive way to collect the data required to understand the shrinkage phenomenon. Busetto, Wick and Gumbinger (2020, p.1) describe qualitative research as “the study of a specific phenomenon including its qualities, manifestations, the context in which it appears, the perspectives and how it is perceived”. A primary objective of the study is to understand the discourse and connotations surrounding the shrinkage phenomenon within the field of urban planning. Qualitative research methods prove especially useful given its ability to contribute insight and knowledge into areas which, are complex and difficult to interpret (Crowe, Inder & Porter, 2015). The following chapter will provide more context into the study structure and the methods used for data collection.

Finland was chosen as the focus area for the research in order to understand the connotations, discourse and representation of the shrinkage phenomenon from primarily individuals working within the country. Providing a geographical context or boundary is important as studies are based on the researcher’s ability to utilise knowledge provided through observations, people and interactions within a specified physical space (Hyett et al., 2014). Finland was selected to provide a geographical boundary and context for the purposes of the study and for the comparison of experiences and knowledge amongst the interviewees. Whilst the research is focused on the local scale, the national scale discussion and debate is also relevant to an extent within the shrinkage phenomenon discourse.

3.1 Methodology

Qualitative methods facilitate the process of conceptualising research to minimise the uncertainty surrounding a phenomenon and by developing the knowledge so the unknowns become clearer (Sofaer, 1999). The nature of the research was to understand any trends on the preconceived notions or stigma surrounding the urban shrinkage phenomenon. The use of qualitative methods assisted in identifying patterns amongst the different factors and variables in order to highlight these distinctions (Sofaer, 1999). Qualitative methods allow for the ability to further test, understand and develop the hypothesis of the phenomenon being portrayed in a negative light within the field of urban planning. The categorisation of different research methods into paradigms is typically based on aspects of beliefs, theories, standards of research and findings (Clark, 1998; Doyle, Brady & Byrne, 2009). Doyle et al. (2009) underlines the importance of researchers identifying where the research is located within a paradigm, as this will influence the questions to be explored and the methods used to solve them.

Qualitative methods include a diverse range of studies however, all have comparable characteristics including:

- Aim in providing in-depth understanding of participants which include experiences, perspectives and history;
- Small, purposefully selected samples;
- Interactive and close contact data collection methods;
- Rich and extensive data;
- Analysis open to concepts, ideas which may demonstrate patterns or explanations; and
- Results which tend to focus on social meanings (Moriarty 2011, p.2-3).

Qualitative research and methods are able to provide solutions to many questions that quantitative methods are not able to (Clark 1998, p.1247). Whilst quantitative methods produce data in the form of numeric results, which are quantifiable, Sofaer (1999, p.1102) highlights that qualitative methods have the potential to develop meaningful “quantities” or produce an instrumental value. Another alternative approach is through mixed methods research, which is beneficial for exploring various topics or questions from different perspectives (Fakis, Hilliam, Stoneley & Townend, 2013; Seymour, 2012). Whilst often described as a third methodological approach and becoming a more dominant paradigm, mixed method approaches are often criticised for combining methods, which can result in polarising perspectives (Doyle et al., 2009). Although triangulation and a mixed methods approach can enhance the reliability of a study, it can become problematic and challenging without ample knowledge of the two methods approach (Doyle et al. 2009, p.183-184; Seymour, 2012). While a quantitative and mixed methods approach was considered, a qualitative research approach for this study and topic was deemed to be the most appropriate.

3.2 Method: Interviews

Interviews are one of the most common and familiar ways of qualitative data collection as it explores the interviewee’s experiences, beliefs and identity (Alsaawi, 2014). Interviews have the ability to produce diverse perspectives through the alternative approaches towards conducting interviews (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Through interviews, the interviewer is able to gain a better understanding of the interviewee’s perceptions and insights based on the research topic or question (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006, p.314). There are many ways to categorise and conduct qualitative interviews, which can broadly be categorised as unstructured, semi-structured and structured (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

For the purpose of this research study, semi-structured interviews were deemed to be the most appropriate format for the interview conduction. Semi-structured interviews have proven to be a popular method of data collection due to its versatility and flexibility (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson & Kangasniemi 2016, p.2955). It is often used as the only or primary source of data collection for qualitative research projects as it provides the possibility to organise open-ended questions ahead of time whilst still allowing other topics of interest to arise (Alsaawi, 2014; Busetto et al., 2020; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006, p.315). The conduction of semi-structured interviews permits the discovery and discussion of shared understandings and topics amongst those being interviewed (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006, p.317). Through this approach, the researcher is able to gain an in-depth and comprehensive variety of responses which may otherwise be deprived through a structured approach (Alsaawi 2014, p.151).

DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) emphasise the importance of interviews fostering a personal relationship between the interviewer and interviewee through open, direct and verbal questions that tell of the interviewee's story and experiences. There are many benefits to conducting qualitative interview research including flexibility, opportunities it provides to access meanings, perspectives, interpretations plus highlighting differences and its sensitivity to expression (Willig, 2001; Lloyd, Gatherer & Kalsy, 2006; Busetto et al., 2020). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews provide an environment that enables reciprocity between the interviewer and interviewee but requires participants to have previous knowledge of the phenomenon or topic being studied (Kallio et al. 2016, p.2955).

The conduction of qualitative research, specifically in the form of semi-structured interviews, provides a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives and insights from urban planners, researchers and other experts in the field. The interviews were conducted with interviewees remotely through Zoom, with the exception of one interview that was conducted at a library in Helsinki. The exception of the one face-to-face meeting is not viewed to be an influential variable or factor in the results provided. Given the on-going pandemic, remote interviews through Zoom were deemed to be a safer alternative than face-to-face meetings. Furthermore, the geographical locations of some of the cities which the interviewees worked in would have proven challenging to get to, given time and travel constraints regardless of the situation.

3.2.1 Sampling practicality and bias

An important aspect to take into consideration when conducting interviews is the sampling and selection of participants. Whilst there are no specific guidelines for a substantial sample size, Tuckett (2004, p.2) suggests a sample of 12 to 20 sources in providing a holistic approach for data collection. Such sample size is typically enough to achieve maximum variation especially in qualitative research given the

descriptive and in-depth nature of the data (Tuckett, 2004). Although a numeric sample size provides a guideline for researchers, there are two additional forms of criteria to keep in mind. Sufficiency of data can often be determined by the interviewer in addition to data saturation where similar pieces of information from previous interviews continue to arise (Seidman, 2013; Alsaawi, 2014).

Mays and Pope (1995) highlight that random sampling is typically uncommon in qualitative interview research, given the importance of the interviewees having the relevant knowledge and experience on the topic. With knowledge in mind, it is essential that the approach to sampling cannot be random, and participants need to be purposefully selected to ensure relevance to the study phenomenon. Alsaawi (2014, p.152) further reinforces that a self-selection process for participants of the interview is much more meaningful and appropriate than a random selection approach.

The interviewees were purposefully selected through directly contacting cities, municipalities and organisations throughout Finland. The sampling technique would align with a purposeful sample as interviewees were contacted and selected based on the following factors:

- Knowledge or expertise within the field of urban planning and/or shrinkage phenomenon;
- Cities and municipalities experiencing trends of shrinkage/growth (based on historical population data); and
- The geographical locality of cities and municipalities.

A goal of the study was to have maximum variation in terms of geographical context. This would contribute another aspect to the research, however the only control over the sample size was through cities and individuals, which returned interest in participating. Whilst attention was given to the number of participants to provide a general guideline of the number of interviewees required, sufficiency and saturation were used as criteria to determine the adequate sampling group (Seidman, 2013; Alsaawi, 2014). A total of sixteen interviews were conducted and the data sources will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Qualitative research is often criticised as being subjective to researcher bias due to the personal attachment and investment the researcher has in the project and with data largely being in the form of personal impressions, stories and feelings (Mays & Pope, 1995). However, it is important to note that whilst there is the potential for bias, the significance of the research topic to the researcher is not only driven by the gap in research but also provides a point of motivation and interest for the researcher itself. A key area of concern with interviews is the possibility of bias or manipulation because of the questions or direction in which the conversation is being steered by the interviewer, given the personal nature (Harris & Brown 2010, p.2). Although there is always the possibility of unintentional biasness

or manipulation, it stresses the importance of the interviewer being able to maintain a neutral position with an open-minded view towards the topics being discussed.

3.2.2 Language

It is crucial to recognise that language can often prove to be a barrier in research. This is especially the case when interviews are conducted in a country or language different to the researcher or interviewee's first language. Although the focus of the study was on Finland, the research was conducted, compiled and executed in English. It was noted that English was a second language for most interviewees and inevitably, communication difficulties can arise. This was highlighted by some of the participants where there was the occasional hesitancy or lack of confidence in being able to fully express their views compared to in their primary language.

This factor was taken into consideration in the formation of the interview questions and during discussion to ensure the use of straightforward language where possible. Nonetheless, Lloyd et al. (2006, p.1387) states the importance of being able to ensure that qualitative interview research is still conducted in light of communication problems with interviewees, as understanding their perspectives and experiences is crucial in being able to have the representation of different groups.

Language is important to note as an influential factor as terms and meanings can be interpreted differently between individuals (Mays & Pope, 1995). A primary objective of the research is to understand the shrinkage phenomenon and the way it is understood in the context of urban planning. However, the language and terminology related to the planning field is not expected to cause confusion in interpretation as participants were selected on the basis of their relevant knowledge. The sample group consisted of urban planners alongside other relevant researchers and experts who have worked closely with the phenomenon and given this, it is likely that understanding of the terminology used was comparable.

3.3 Analysis

The interpretation and analysis of data is one of the most crucial stages of the research process. It involves the researcher drawing conclusions of the themes, topics and stories discussed through the interview process (Castleberry & Nolen 2018, p.812). Furthermore, this process may also uncover areas of future research opportunities or questions. When it comes to data analysis, two frequently used approaches include content and thematic analysis (Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). Content and thematic analysis are particularly favourable to research studies that involve lower levels of

interpretation, compared to studies which are based on grounded theory and more complex (Vaismoradi et al. 2013, p.399). Crowe et al. (2015, p.617) distinguishes the difference between the two analysis methods through stating that thematic analysis is associated with finding patterns across the data, whilst content analysis focuses on identifying clusters and frequencies in points of interest.

Content analysis is beneficial in establishing trends in the data, but also helpful when focusing on groups or individuals of interest (Stemler, 2000; Weber, 1990). Given this, the primary method of data analysis used was content analysis in the form of coding and understanding patterns or trends in key themes and topics highlighted by the interviewees. Stemler (2000) highlights that content analysis is a systematic and replicable approach to compressing data, which is usually done through coding. Coding is an important aspect of data analysis as it involves the identification of similarities and differences amongst the different data sets (Castleberry & Nolen 2018, p.808). A thematic analysis approach was also used to draw out and understand the key themes from the interviews. It is through the analytical process that researchers begin to develop a thematic map which provides a visual representation of the themes and their relationship to the research question or topic (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Crowe et al., 2015).

For the data analysis and coding process, the software programme 'Atlas.ti' was used. The programme facilitated for the combination of all interview transcripts into one document. Following this, the interview transcripts were analysed, and key topics and themes were grouped and coded together. Within the primary groups, subcategories were also formed based on relevant and reoccurring points from which underlying information emerged. The process of coding involves condensing and omitting information that may not be relevant or beneficial to the study at the discretion and interpretation of the researcher (Lindgren et al., 2020). The key is to highlight points or 'red threads' which occur through different categories of data sets that bring valuable meaning to the phenomenon being studied (Graneheim, Lindgren & Lundman, 2017).

Another important aspect to consider is content validity, which reinforces the relevance of items discussed for the purposes of assessment (Ricci, Lanfranchi, Lemetayer, Rotonda, Guillemin, Coste & Spitz 2019, p.149). As highlighted by Tuckett (2005, p.77) symbolic interactions with objects and their meanings can differ between individuals although social constructs can produce common meanings and understandings. However, one of the relevant ways to ensure content validity in collected data is through direct communication with people of interest (Ricci et al. 2019, p.149). This is strengthened through the purposeful sampling of participants to ensure relevance and validity.

CHAPTER 4: Data

The primary aim of the research was to understand and examine the portrayal of the shrinkage phenomenon within the context of Finnish urban planning. The interviewee group comprised mostly of urban planners, working in cities and municipalities around Finland as well as other relevant consultants, researchers and experts with knowledge on the phenomenon. Although urban planners and architects work in the private sector as well, the city and municipality planners were selected as the focus given their influence in the long-term planning and development of the city. All interviewees with the exception of one participant, had knowledge and experience specific to Finland. This participant was based in Estonia and had extensive knowledge and research on the phenomenon and was able to provide valuable insight from a more generalised view.

Following initial discussions and research into the shrinkage phenomenon, it quickly became evident that although a highly important topic, it was also a somewhat sensitive and delicate topic for many cities. In an attempt to organise preliminary discussions with cities and relevant experts, many were hesitant or unwilling to discuss for various reasons and vigilant in their responses. As a result, when it came to contacting interviewees, a promise of anonymity was deemed appropriate and influenced the willingness to participate. Anonymity in qualitative studies is especially important as it is an ethical approach to conducting research and protecting the participants (Walford, 2005). This decision was considered to be pivotal to the study for creating a safe environment where people could openly discuss their experiences. In the end, it also contributed to a higher response rate when compared to the responses received for the initial discussions.

Whilst confidentiality and anonymity are often a crucial aspect to ensuring involvement from participants, it is also noted that there can be challenges associated with it (Wiles et al., 2008). Although precautions and steps can be taken, there is no approach that can ensure complete anonymity of research participants (Wiles et al., 2008; Walford, 2005). There is always the possibility that the identity of individuals or areas can be uncovered, especially when put together with other data or existing information that is already known by others (Walford, 2005). In saying so, Wiles et al. (2008, p.423) identifies that the problems associated with anonymity are often less problematic when the focus of the study is on a phenomenon, whereby the information or background of the participant is not as important compared to other studies focusing on individuals or more sensitive information. Furthermore, Walford (2005, p.85) highlights that whilst there are challenges associated with ensuring anonymity, it is important to note that participants are aware that the data and information will be used and made available publicly.

Anonymity is essentially the principle whereby people or participants are not named or associated with any information that would allow for the identification of the individual (Walford, 2005). A primary way of ensuring the anonymity of research participants is through the use of pseudonyms (Wiles, Crow, Heath & Charles, 2008). Table 1 provides an overview of the individuals interviewed, including their roles and areas of expertise and the reference code which will be used to identify their remarks for the remainder of this study, as some smaller municipalities have very few urban planners. It was important that planners were not linked to any specific municipalities and therefore, a general description of the location and the type of city is given to provide more context.

In an effort to understand the shrinkage phenomenon and its portrayal, the perspective from shrinking cities proved to be of significant importance. Given the complexity of the shrinkage phenomenon and many of the implications presenting challenges to quantify, a shrinking city was determined through population loss as a criterion and starting point for the study. The data for the shrinking cities was taken from Statistic Finland's population data (2019) which outlined the cities that have experienced population decline over the previous years. As discussed, whilst efforts were made to have a variation amongst shrinking cities, in terms of characteristics such as location, geographical size, population and so forth, it required the willingness to participate on their behalf.

Although shrinking cities remain the key focus of the study, there were two interviews with urban planners working in 'growth cities' in Finland. This was important to provide a contrasting viewpoint between the perceptions of urban planners in growing and shrinking cities and whether the shrinkage phenomenon is given any consideration in growing cities. Furthermore, as reinforced by Haase et al. (2016) the interconnected and multidimensional processes of shrinkage are complex and there can still be shrinkage occurring within 'growing cities' and vice versa.

Furthermore, in order to ensure anonymity and privacy, all interviewees received a privacy statement prior to the conduction of the interviews. Consent was also obtained for the recording of the interviews for transcription purposes and an opportunity was provided to voice any queries or concerns prior to commencement. Following the interviews, all data, information and materials were securely stored until the completion of the study and subsequently, all materials and information were appropriately destroyed.

Table 1: Interview schedule

INTERVIEWEE	SOURCE REFERENCE CODE	ROLE/EXPERTISE(S)	MUNICIPALITY REFERENCE CODE	CITY DESCRIPTION *AS DEFINED BY URBAN PLANNERS
1	Urban Planner 1 UP1	City architect	Municipality A	Small city with a large geographical area with two identities; town and countryside mentality.
2	Urban Planner 2 UP2	Director of land use and urban planning	Municipality B	The ‘capital city’ of the region which plays a fundamental role in economic growth and welfare.
3	Urban Planner 3 UP3	Civil engineer	Municipality C	Small city with important history associated with the sea and automotive industries.
4	Urban Planner 4 UP4	Project coordinator for suburb developments	Municipality D	An old Finnish city gaining momentum and buzz with good trajectory and ambitious goals for the future.
5	Urban Planner 5 UP5	Director of city planning	Municipality E	City with industrial heritage, the sea and harbours form defining characteristics of the city.
6	Urban Planner 6 UP6	City planner	Municipality E	Mid-size Finnish city, with a true historical city centre.
7	Urban Planner 7 UP7	City architect	Municipality F	Large city in geographic context, which has formed through many municipal mergers.
8	Urban Planner 8 UP8	Land use planner	Municipality G	Very small Finnish town with both rural and city characteristics.

9	Urban Planner 9	UP9	Researcher in urban planning division	Municipality H	Large growing Finnish city often compared on the international scale.
10	Urban Planner 10	UP10	City planner	Municipality E	City formed through the merging of several municipalities currently experiencing shrinkage.
11	Urban Planner 11	UP11	Head of urban planning	Municipality I	Very old Finnish city consisting of three towns and a core city centre with importance in harbour activities.
12	Researcher/expert 1	RE1	Deputy mayor Head of urban planning and realestate Chairman of city council	-	
13	Researcher/expert 2	RE2	Professor of economic geography and regional studies	-	
14	Researcher/expert 3	RE3	Researcher in urban space in shrinking cities University lecturer Town architect	-	
15	Researcher/expert 4	RE4	Political scientist working in private consultancy focusing on regional development	-	
16	Researcher/expert 5	RE5	Professor of urban planning Architect and urban planner	-	

The complete interview schedule of questions can be found at Appendix A and Appendix B. Whilst the primary objectives of the questions asked to the two groups were similar, Table 2 illustrates some of the key discussion points and motives for speaking to the separate groups.

URBAN PLANNERS	RESEARCHERS, CONSULTANTS & EXPERTS
What the shrinkage phenomenon means for urban planning in practice.	What the shrinkage phenomenon means in a theoretical or academic context.
Exploring the spatial development and shrinkage patterns transpiring within the city.	Exploring spatial development and shrinkage patterns from the perspective of Finland.
Understanding the implications (positive/negative) of shrinkage.	Understanding the implications (positive/negative) of shrinkage.
What measures and strategies are used to adapt to shrinkage and the consideration of shrinkage in future planning?	What measures and strategies are used to adapt to shrinkage and the consideration of shrinkage in future planning at a regional/national level?
Do the tactics and strategies used to overcome shrinkage still favour growth as the end result?	Understanding why there is the hesitancy for cities to declare shrinkage.
Exploring the connection between the economy, industry and the shrinkage phenomenon.	Exploring the connection between the economy, industry and the shrinkage phenomenon with Finland's urbanisation history.
If, and why there is the negative connotation surrounding shrinkage?	If, and why there is the negative connotation surrounding shrinkage?
Examining the governance and political influence affecting shrinkage actions at the local level.	Examining the governance and political influence affecting shrinkage actions.

Table 2: Key discussion areas and objectives of interview groups

CHAPTER 5 – Discussion and Analysis

The complex and multidimensional processes contributing to the shrinkage phenomenon makes it difficult to identify or pinpoint the phenomenon's characteristics. It often includes one or a combination of the following factors: economic, demographic, suburbanisation, structural and environmental changes (Wiechmann & Bontje, 2015). In order to explore the portrayal of the shrinkage phenomenon, it is crucial to understand how urban planners, researchers and other relevant experts working in Finland interpret the phenomenon. It is through this understanding where key themes and ideas will emerge that explain why the shrinkage phenomenon is often portrayed in such a negative light. The following discussion outlines the core themes and topics (Figure 2) which emerged from the content analysis of the interviews and its contribution to the research topic.

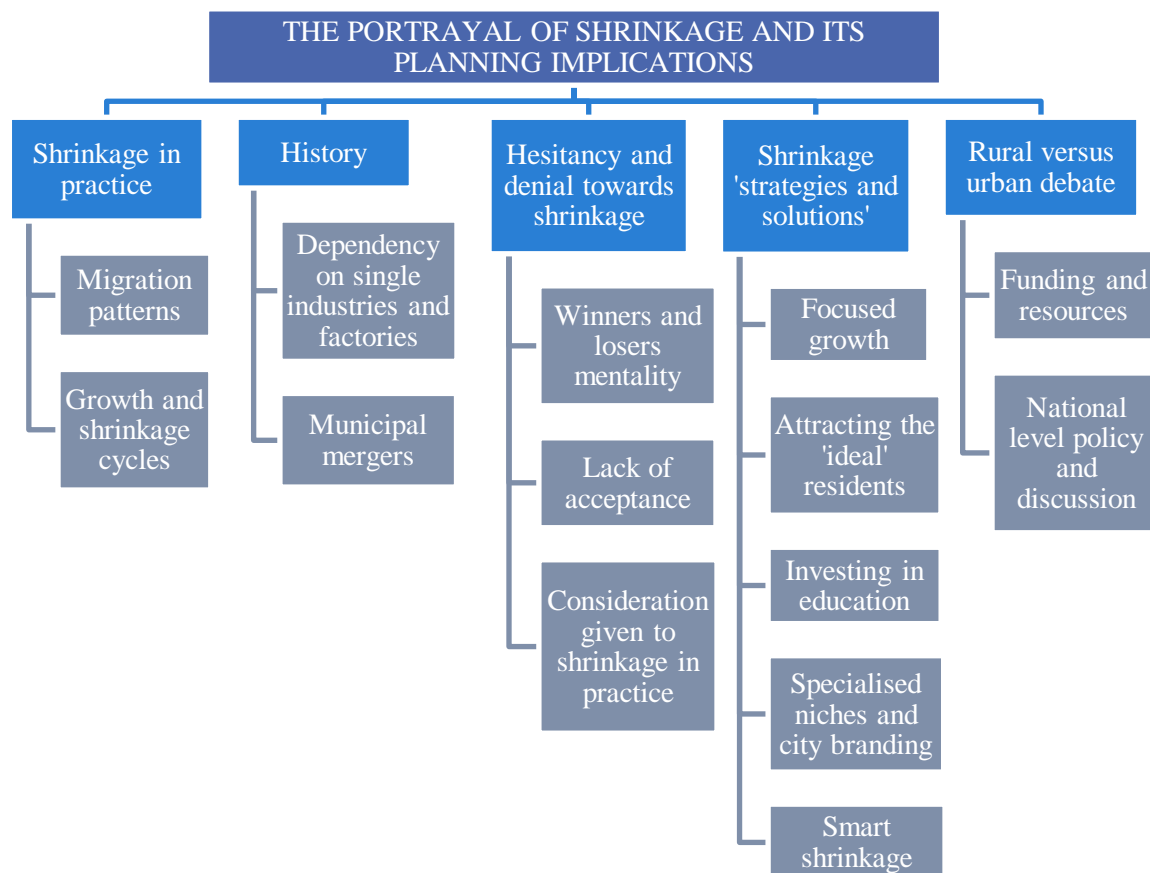


Figure 2: Key themes and topics which emerged from the content analysis phase

5.1 Understanding shrinkage from a practical perspective

The discourse and terminology used to describe the shrinkage phenomenon by the interviewees is depicted at Figure 3 in the form of a word cloud. Word clouds are a collection of texts, which provide an overview of the information through a visualisation technique. In addition to this, word clouds have the ability to present an alternative perspective on the matter or topic (Tessem, Bjørnstad, Chen & Nyre, 2015). For the purpose of presenting the terminology and how the interviewees understood the shrinkage phenomenon, a word cloud was employed to present the responses. The key terminology is illustrated in the word cloud, with the largest text reflecting the most used key words amongst the interviewee's responses.



Figure 3: Illustration of key words from the interviewee's description of the shrinkage phenomenon

As shown, a 'declining population' was the most used phrase to define the shrinkage phenomenon along with reduced public services and a negative connotation. The complexity and manifestation of the shrinkage phenomenon demonstrates its ability to vary significantly depending on the location of the city (Haase et al., 2017). It is interesting and unsurprising that the most common association made by interviewees with the phenomenon was a decline in population. There are many reasons for this, however of the many implications of shrinkage, a decline in population is the most noticeable. A decline in population is not only reflected through the reduced resources available to the city but it is also a quantifiable measure, thus often used as a key indicator of shrinkage (Panagopoulus & Barreira, 1978).

Whilst population decline was commonly used to describe the phenomenon, it was also noted to be much more complex. It is even an understatement to simply define the phenomenon through only population loss.

The demographic decline is not enough, there should also be some negative outcomes on the economy, connected with social problems and the mental setting of the local people. When cities which have loss population for long periods but have a growing economy and the people are satisfied with living there, it becomes difficult to classify it as a shrinking city. (RE3, 2022)

As population decline has been established as one of the driving factors contributing to the shrinkage phenomenon and its understanding, it is crucial to highlight the migration patterns and trends occurring within Finland. A common understanding amongst interviewees working in local municipalities was the migration of residents at the local, regional and national level (illustrated in Figure 4). Although Figure 4 represents the common migration patterns at the three levels, it is also crucial to note that the migration patterns occur in both directions at each level. Figure 4 provides a simplified diagram of the most common migration patterns as stated by the interviewees, although it includes many more complexities than depicted.

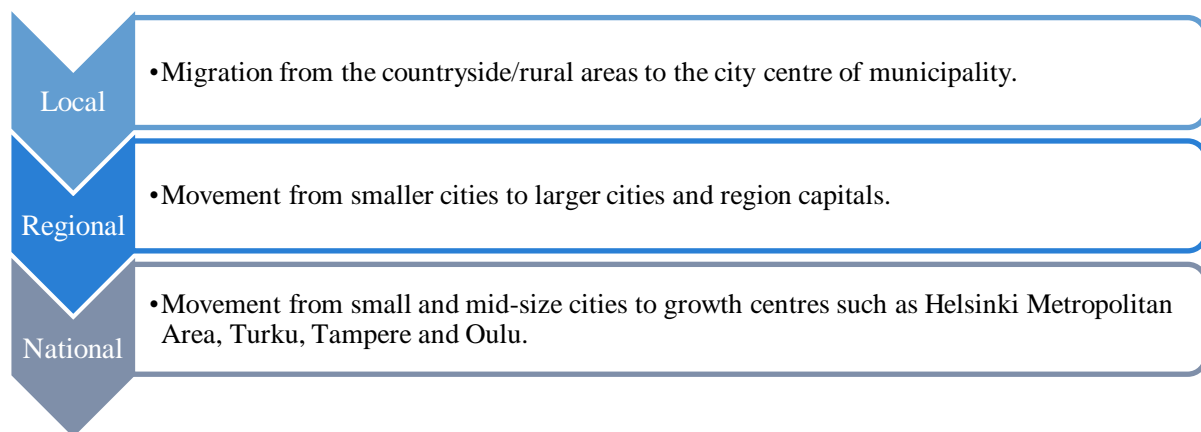


Figure 4: Common understanding of migration patterns at different levels

It is important to note that whilst these cities and towns may be experiencing an overall decline in population, there are still pockets of growth occurring within the city as reinforced through the interviews. This is largely due to the migration of residents from the rural and countryside areas to the city centre as illustrated in Figure 4. Taking the COVID-19 pandemic into account, there has also been a significant impact on some of the typical migration patterns and trends. For instance, there has been an increase in reverse migration trends where people are moving out of city centres back to the countryside in order to have more space.

The pandemic has changed the ideas of remote working and the ability to work away from the workplace. There is the possibility for young families to establish their home away from large cities or where they find work. (UP10, 2022)

The effects of the pandemic may well be a turning point for some of these shrinking cities as the culture and flexibility surrounding remote working has completely changed. Multilocality and the idea of living and working in different places has become the new norm and accepted over the past years given the circumstances. Gorman-Murray and Bissell (2018, p.233) discuss the upsides to multilocality in providing people with the ability to live and work diffusely, further emphasising flexibility in work and life arrangements. There is no longer the mindset of people needing to live where they are employed, thus providing more flexibility and diversity in choices for individuals and families. Interviewees working in smaller municipalities have seen the benefits of such trends during the past years. There is an attraction in being able to offer alternative lifestyles at a lower cost and away from the busy city life given this newfound flexibility (UP7, 2022).

The geographic locale in which the phenomenon tends to occur and what that means within the Finnish context is another key aspect to explore. Majority of the interviewees worked in small to mid-sized shrinking cities (except for the two growth cities for comparison). From the perspective of the urban planners working in small to mid-sized cities, there was a unified view of where shrinkage occurs. Most believed shrinkage to only be a problem for areas in eastern, central and northern Finland, along with some of the coastal areas. Shrinkage was not perceived to be an issue for southern Finland, with an underlying consensus that the growth centres of Helsinki, Turku, Tampere and even Oulu were to blame for the shrinkage experienced by many smaller cities. The interviewees of small to mid-size cities discussed the growth centres collecting most migrating people, whilst other cities continue to battle with the difficulties associated with shrinkage.

It is too straightforward to simply declare that growing cities do not experience shrinkage or any of the repercussions that are associated with it. Growing urban centres in Finland are also experiencing the phenomenon, whereby there are pockets of shrinkage within the city (UP4, 2022). This can be compared to what small and mid-sized cities are experiencing, where growth is evident in the centre areas and patterns of shrinkage clustered around the countryside and rural areas. However, whilst there are patterns of shrinkage across the country, both in growing and shrinking cities, it is clear that the determining factor is the geographical scale at which it occurs. This is further reinforced by Figure 4, where the type of city and rate at which the phenomenon occurs, significantly affects the scale of the implications.

5.1.1 Growth and shrinkage cycles

The phases of growth and shrinkage in a city's life cycle should be viewed from the same perspective and level as one another. The natural phases in a city's life cycle include growth, stagnation and decline, with external factors and structural shifts influencing this (Figure 5). The lifecycle phases of a city are not only highlighted by Martinez-Fernandez et al. (2012) but also reinforced as a common understanding drawn from the interviewees regarding growth and shrinkage patterns.

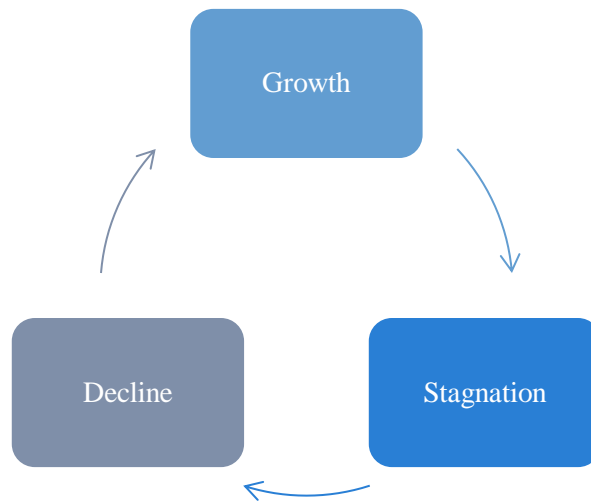


Figure 5: Phases in the lifecycle of a city

Different factors and events may lead to the process of shrinkage being experienced in the city and at different scales, in terms of the implications that it may bring (Haase et al., 2017). However, amongst the interviewees, there was a consensus regarding the key growth and shrinkage patterns affecting cities across Finland. The interviewees highlighted some or all of the following experiences or observations being made within cities experiencing shrinkage:

- The migration to city centres or to the 'region capital' as one of the key trends being witnessed.
- Urbanisation being concentrated in the growing cities of Helsinki, Turku, Tampere and Oulu.
- Pockets of shrinkage occurring within cities that are classified as 'growing' cities.
- Whilst the city centre of some shrinking cities is growing through migration, the price of housing is declining in some city centre areas. This requires attention from policy makers as it influences the attractiveness of the city.
- Cities are experiencing cycles of growth, stagnation, and decline. This cycle can repeat itself within the lifespan of the city and following a period of decline, growth is possible again.
- A trend whereby cities that have experienced periods of rapid growth, have or now are experiencing shrinkage at a more rapid rate. There needs to be more attention directed to the

rate at which growth and shrinkage occurs within a city, with an emphasis on more ‘natural’, slow development in order to assist with the development of stable cities.

- The discussion and debate surrounding the shrinkage phenomenon is still very much directed towards rural areas, as opposed to a phenomenon that affects both urban and rural areas. Although there are many examples of urban areas now experiencing shrinkage in Finland, the consequences of this will only become more prominent in the future.

5.2 Past decisions presenting challenges today

Finland’s historical events and path to urbanisation has played a fundamental role in leading to some of the processes and events that have contributed to the shrinkage phenomenon. Structural changes, rapid population growth and urbanisation patterns following World War II, reinforced the importance of urban and spatial planning. This further highlights the quick turnaround and traditional roles and functions of planning being developed on the premise of growth (Popper & Popper, 2002). It is important to note that the Finnish urban planning system, along with its role as a land use zoning system, was developed on the basis of preparing and accommodating for growth (RE5, 2022). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that there is such bias towards city growth within the field of work.

This illustrates the challenges and significant changes that would be required to plan and adapt to shrinking cities. It also raises the question of whether the existing zoning and land use planning system in Finland would be able to accommodate a shift in the work that needs to be done. It is no longer a question of what to plan, develop or build next, but instead how to make use of the existing infrastructure or perhaps even ‘unplan’ what is already there (Newman et al., 2018). UP10 (2022) further reinforces that for smaller shrinking towns, it becomes a task of ‘unplanning’ and only maintaining the small areas required to sustain the minimal population.

5.2.1 Dependency on single industry/factory

When it comes to the development and establishment of industries that have contributed to the growth in many Finnish cities, it is evident that there has been the cumbersome reliance on a single industry to maintain the livelihood and wellbeing of cities. Given this, there is a direct relationship between the economic structure and processes driving urbanisation, with the shrinkage problems now being experienced in these cities (Leetmaa et al., 2013). The connection between the economy and industrialisation sectors and its contribution to shrinkage quickly materialised as a reoccurring point of discussion amongst the interviewees.

From the interviews, the following three key points connecting these factors were identified:

- Many small towns being dependent on a single factory or industry.
- The transformation of industries and economic development throughout history and the inadequacy to adapt to change.
- The rise and fall of economies and industries simultaneous with growth and shrinkage trends in municipalities.

Unlike neighbouring countries, the process of urbanisation occurred relatively late in Finland and the economy relied heavily on agriculture and farming practices (RE4, 2022). Economic and industrial transformations have led to the withdrawal of many labour-intensive industries (Sánchez-Moral et al., 2015). These economic and industrial transformations have further driven the shrinkage process for many smaller cities that are lacking in diverse economies and industries. These transformations have seen either a total redundancy for certain industries and factories or at the very least, the labour force given the automation process.

There was a culture in some towns and cities where they relied too much on big industries [...] there are even some examples in the 1970's and 1980's, where these big industries interests were to prevent smaller industries and small businesses in order to retain the cheap labour force for themselves. (RE1, 2022)

The number of jobs being created in the city can have a significant role in its survival. Some of the key industries that cities around Finland were and are focused on include automotive, information technology (IT) and forestry, such as paper and pulp mills (RE2, 2022). Whilst the forestry and agriculture industries have played pivotal roles in the economic and urbanisation history of Finland, the role and reliance on such industries today is questionable. The importance of these industries in GDP terms has declined over time however, they still continue to hold a powerful economic role today (RE4, 2022).

The reliance on such industries has affected the country's economic change significantly demonstrating the high regard for such industries. It also testifies the role and responsibility that it has contributed to the economic growth, social welfare and wellbeing of some cities. However, this has also led to its 'downfall' when there was the inability to adapt to economic shifts (Sánchez-Moral et al., 2015). The trend of dependency and lack of economic diversity further exacerbates the crisis experienced during the downfall. Whilst the relationship between the inability to adapt to economic shifts and dependency on single industries has proved to be detrimental to some cities in the past, it has not deterred some cities.

Industry has played a major part in the development of Municipality E as a whole since the 1800's and therefore, the two are very much connected. The industrial past of the city forms a strong platform for the new large-scale industries to be developed in the coming future. (UP10, 2022)

For such cities, there does not appear to be a shift in ways of thinking despite the grappling implications of shrinkage. The lack of strategic planning practices and tools to adapt to shrinkage will only further exacerbate the implications. To move forward, it would require new ideas such as how to utilise the existing economic and physical infrastructure to accommodate future development and needs (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez 2011, p.1390). It is also by diversifying the opportunities and investment projects for the future that cities will become less vulnerable to future transformation and structural changes (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012).

Regions or cities which have been able to adapt to global economic shifts such as through the transformation to a more knowledge-based or diversified economy, will be more resilient and come out on top. (RE2, 2022)

Notwithstanding the above and as outlined by UP10 (2022), for some cities separating certain industries from the city's future proves to be a challenge. In some instances, key industries have played such a vital role in shaping the city that it has ultimately become part of the shrinking city's industrial identity. For some, this identity that has been closely tied with an industry and historical development is understandably difficult to surrender or separate. The same can be said for the residents that have a long-standing family history with an area, especially where there are memories and emotions connected. These place attachments often threaten the ability to adapt to change when residents feel their attachment may be threatened (Devine-Wright, 2009). Place attachment and identity can be very powerful for those that hold these values and ideals, displaying a mentality of refusing to give up or let go.

5.2.2 The agglomeration of cities and towns

The agglomeration of smaller towns and cities with their neighbouring municipalities has been a common reaction to shrinkage across Finland (RE1, 2022). This reveals the toll of the phenomenon and was emphasised by various interviewees, who highlighted that the history of the municipalities encompassed different cities, which had merged in the past to create the municipality that it is today.

In the past, there were hundreds of more municipalities than what we have today, the number has been declining. This is one reaction towards shrinkage, where municipalities which are declining have merged with the next larger municipality (RE1, 2022).

Many of the municipalities have transformed significantly over time and are characterised by large geographical areas with disparate development patterns (RE4, 2022). The management of merged municipalities has also proven to be difficult for many local municipalities. The agglomeration processes have led to various urban sub centres within municipalities and the challenge of where to invest and direct resources is often a point of contention (UP7, 2022; UP10, 2022).

Furthermore, at the local level, the urban fabric is also being transformed through the emergence of new industries. It is evident that there are significant differences between old and new industries, which are planning to establish themselves today. Many new industries are requiring vast areas of land compared to old and existing industries in many situations (UP5, 2022). This has led to the rapid expansion of the structure and size of cities. However, that said, the real urban structure along with its existing population and facilities are not expanding with the geographical urban area. Once again, this proves to be a challenge for urban planners and raises the question of whether the same patterns will repeat itself in the future, if another economic and industrial transformation renders these industries redundant.

Given the history associated with merging municipalities, this would explain the tendency for the interviewees to refer to the areas in which they work, as regions with city centres as supposed to the city centres themselves. With shrinking cities often under financial pressure, maintaining large geographical areas not only dilutes the planning attention that can be given to all areas, but also the resources available. UP2 (2022) reinforces the requirement for more attention and focus to be directed towards specific urban areas or cities as drivers of society and the economy, especially when there is currently so much emphasis on the broader scale region level.

5.3 Shrinkage as a double ended sword

The implications, which the shrinkage phenomenon brings have already begun to shape why the phenomenon is typically perceived in a negative light and often stigmatised. Interviewees working within the shrinking cities or researching the phenomenon even went on to highlight shrinkage as being a taboo topic (RE5, 2022; UP3, 2022; UP4, 2022). This is largely due to the negative repercussions and challenges it brings to shrinking Finnish cities such as a loss in population which ultimately results in a loss of resources and therefore limits what cities can offer or do for its residents (RE3, 2022; UP11, 2022).

The scale and rate of population decline, including its ripple effects, varies significantly amongst cities. In some instances, a gradual decline is seen while other times are more dramatic, especially following a crisis of some sort (Sánchez-Moral et al., 2015). Multiple interviewees also noted that this had

repercussions in many other aspects of the city, transpiring in the urban and built structure of the city. As a result, shrinkage also affects services, amenities, accessibility, and the livelihoods of residents amongst other quality of life indicators. People's attitude and mentality toward the shrinkage phenomenon has shaped the way people understand and portray shrinkage. The terminology and understanding associated with certain words, such as 'shrinkage' can by default be surrounded by a negative perception. However, the focus and regard given to growth and future growth has had a significant influence along with the unfavourable implications it brings (Bontje & Musterd, 2012).

Nevertheless, there are many other ways in which the term 'shrinkage' can be perceived. For example, if shrinkage is discussed in the context of a shrinking carbon footprint or a decrease in the price of an item, then the perception surrounding the term shifts to a completely different perspective. There is the need to deviate from this negative perception and to bring awareness about the opportunities that can arise from shifting away from a growth ideology (Haase et al., 2017).

5.3.1 Winners and losers

There is a tendency to compare yourself with others and this is no different for cities. There is the notion surrounding city rankings about how well cities perform in comparison to others, especially in an economic context (Wang et al., 2020). In ways, the negativity is very much associated with a winners and losers mentality, stemming from the ideals and history of cities and planning only viewing growth as 'success'. This is no different in Finland, where the rate of a cities (de)growth influences their economic role within the region (UP2, 2022). This essentially affects their importance when compared to other cities and there is the ongoing battle and competition brewing below the surface.

In Finland, this is further reinforced by examples such the C21 network, which only further ignites these comparisons (UP9, 2022). The C21 network was established to strengthen urban policy debates and the common interests of the 21 largest cities in Finland (City of Helsinki, 2019). For the establishment of a government programme to discuss important matters, such as urban policy to only include the 21 largest cities, further reinforces these growth ideals. It is somewhat shortsighted to only view large cities as being competitive, however it is these city rankings and competition, which fuel the economic and political environment (Saito & Thornley, 2003). Even within the list of the top 21 cities, there are cities within the group that are experiencing shrinkage. It would be predictable to assume that within the group, there is the underlying competition and ranking amongst cities, possibly even a 'failure' affiliation for those which are fighting shrinkage (UP9, 2022).

The responsibility of health and welfare amongst other service and infrastructure provisions have largely fallen on municipalities in the past. More recently, there have been changes to the budgets and resources and the responsibilities of municipalities through the development of new health and wellbeing areas (RE4, 2022). The removal of such responsibilities has in some ways relieved some of the heaviest burdens and large financial costs that have fallen on their shoulders.

There is this history in Finland of municipalities being independent and having their own responsibility to provide for the residents. Growth has really been an enabler for the city to provide for its citizens. (UP5, 2022)

In many ways, this has strengthened the important role that municipalities have in ensuring that residents have access to all services and facilities. When shrinkage occurs, there are less resources flowing through which only enhances the difficulties and pressures that are placed on municipalities and their ability to cater for residents (UP6, 2022).

5.3.2 (Un)acceptance of the shrinkage phenomenon

For cities experiencing shrinkage, accepting that the presence of the phenomenon and its implications still proves to be a significant challenge. Evidently from the interviews, there was a lack of full transparency in declaring and admitting to the public that the phenomenon is affecting cities around Finland. Without the acceptance from all stakeholders and parties responsible for the development and planning of a city, it considerably hinders the opportunities to adapt to moving forward (Haase et al., 2017). Ultimately, the acceptance of shrinkage is proving to be a difficult but also crucial first step in adapting to shrinkage. However, given all the factors and challenges, which arise from the phenomenon, the hesitancy is clearly understandable.

Decision makers need to adopt different ways of thinking and think about how to build city centres of the future. The difficult task at first is to accept that it is happening, then find the right tools to adapt to the situation. (RE2, 2022)

The acceptance of shrinkage is essentially two-fold with both positive and negative aspects. The acceptance of shrinkage would allow for the shift in thinking and provide an opportunity for municipalities to adapt to shrinkage, rather than shying away. On the other hand, it would also to an extent mean no longer focusing on the attraction of new residents and striving for population growth, ceding valuable resources and income which come with growth (UP5, 2022). This presents a difficult decision for municipalities and would be demoralising if the acceptance and attempts to adapt to shrinkage did not yield beneficial and positive outcomes for the city.

While there is an understanding amongst urban planners, researchers and experts to accept and adapt to shrinkage, it also presents its set of challenges (RE2, 2022; UP4, 2022; UP6, 2022). It is apparent to the interviewees that shrinkage poses significant issues for the built environment however, there are attempts to tackle these issues behind closed doors. As highlighted by interviewees, it is clear that endless growth is not viable and there comes a point where cities will likely shrink and, in those instances, it is important to accept and adapt to this (UP2, 2022). However, for some interviewees, where the implications of shrinkage are clearly visible in daily work, such as the constant loss of services, facilities and vacant buildings in the city centre, it also identifies as a clear issue that requires attention. A significant part of this comes down to the understandings of how to manage the phenomenon, which is often a point of contention between urban planners and decision makers (UP1, 2022).

Urban planning in Finland at the local municipal level is largely motivated by the elected decision makers who voice and fight for their goals and ambitions (UP3, 2022). Given the important relationship between urban planners and decision makers, it is evident that differences in opinions would cause significant points of contention amongst the process of decision making and the concept of putting planning into practice. The stigma and negative connotation surrounding the shrinkage phenomenon transpires into how urban planners and decision makers are able to discuss (or the lack of) and make decisions regarding the implications of shrinkage. The taboo of the phenomenon is clear through the ways in which decision makers and their actions can be influenced by accepting shrinkage.

Everyone knows that urban shrinkage is happening and that we should do something about it [...] all politicians and decision makers are denying it and simply focus on getting people in. No city wants to shrink, it means less taxes and you can give people less, then people move to the city less and it is a vicious circle. We want to avoid it so much that the main goals have simply been to avoid it. If you accept it and live by it, it will come true and then continue to happen [...] we need to lift people's spirits and show that we are fighting against it. (UP7, 2022)

For elected policy makers such as municipal governments and politicians it is still quite hard for them. Even though they understand and know it is happening, to say it out aloud. It is an unpopular statement to make that the city will not strive for growth and it will probably not lead to re-election if you are a publicly elected politician which is quite understandable given the negative connotation. (RE2, 2022)

For urban planners and elected decision makers that are apprehensive of the threat to their job and perhaps even their livelihood, it does become the logical decision to conform to the typical standards and to steer away from the controversial topic. To an extent, decision makers have further contributed and emphasised the negative attitudes and mentality towards shrinkage through the lack of discussion and efforts to adapt. Whilst urban planners have largely accepted shrinkage, the general consensus was that the lack of transparency and acceptance was a consequence of elected decision maker's perspective

on the matter (UP1, 2022; UP4, 2022; UP9, 2022). This reinforces the importance of decision makers and urban planners operating on the same page, given the intertwining relationship between the groups.

5.3.3 Consideration given to shrinkage in urban planning

The challenge of shrinkage also brings forward the urgency and obligation to adapt and readjust the ways in which cities are being planned. Future planning and development require a deviation from traditional planning methods (Joutsiniemi et al., 2021). The traditional approaches are no longer a viable option and now requires a solution on how to make use of the existing built environment for the people that continue to live in the city (Newman et al., 2018). Whilst still a point of contention, the complete and transparent acceptance of shrinkage would provide for more fruitful discussion, debate and communication regarding future strategies for cities.

Taking into account future population forecasts, services and facilities needed by residents while ensuring their quality of life are all important factors, which are affected by the shrinkage phenomenon (RE2, 2022). For cities and countries that have accepted the phenomenon, it has allowed for a completely different and proactive approach in addressing the implications (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). Consideration given to shrinkage offers contrasting perspectives amongst the interviewees as to whether the current considerations and practices are adequate, with an underlying sense of denial and unaccountability.

We don't give shrinkage enough attention [...] none of the politicians are talking about it, which means that there are no official goals from our decision makers that we need to respond and take shrinkage into account. (UP1, 2022)

Shrinkage has been taken into consideration, but perhaps not said in so many words in the strategy of the city or the long-term plans. (UP10, 2022)

Furthermore, interviewees agreed that regardless of the approaches, there is significantly more that can and needs to be done with respect to shrinkage. Municipalities and cities have their long-term objectives and future plans outlined in their strategies, questioning whether 'consideration' without accepting or noting shrinkage in future strategies is sufficient to drive the change required.

We did exploratory studies looking into the shrinkage phenomenon and realised that it is seldomly discussed in research, even less so policy. Two years ago, we did a qualitative analysis of all municipal strategies in continental Finland [...] whilst there was the understanding of declining demographic and localities in decline, there was no discussion on shrinkage in any local context. It is strange as it is in some ways lying to the phenomenon that is central to the future of our communities. (RE4, 2022)

The hesitancy to accept and openly discuss shrinkage has led to shortfalls in possible future planning, especially with the opportunity to include appropriate measures in municipal strategies associated with smart shrinkage and the rightsizing of cities (Popper & Popper, 2002). Given the importance of municipal strategies in guiding the long term and future planning of cities, the shrinkage phenomenon should and needs to have a more central role regarding its implications. At the very least, identifying that the phenomenon has the ability to seriously influence future demographics, resources and the urban structure of cities if continually neglected.

The academic and theoretical research surrounding shrinkage plays a pivotal role in understanding the phenomenon and how to put measures into planning practice. It is also clearly visible that the discourse and research surrounding the shrinkage phenomenon in Finland is skewed towards the academic and theoretical perspective, which far outweighs the practical application in planning practice (RE3, 2022).

5.4 ‘Strategies’ to overcome shrinkage

The interviews have demonstrated that the actions taken to accept and adapt to shrinkage have fallen short. A common trend highlighted by the urban planners was the need to strive for future growth and create strategies to support this vision (RE5, 2022; UP2, 2022; UP4, 2022). The justification and reasoning behind taking such a stance towards shrinkage was also similar amongst the interviewees, being the importance of growth to a city’s prospects and the implications of shrinkage. However, trying to ‘overcome’ shrinkage requires a shift in perspective and to learn how to live and adapt to it (Popper & Popper, 2002).

Nonetheless, there was scepticism among some as to whether this would be a viable option given the city’s population decline and future population forecasts. Whilst there are no arguments for the benefits that growth can bring to cities, it does not mean that it will happen or even be a feasible option for shrinking cities (Leo & Anderson, 2006), especially if all economic, demographic and structural factors are signalling against it. This unhealthy fixation on growth also questions the logic and sensibility of “rolling the dice” on a city’s future and hoping that growth will be something that may happen once again.

It is easier to explain the need to focus on tools of how to overcome shrinkage if we set a goal for regrowth. If we set growth as the goal, it is easier to mobilise policy makers, locals and justify why you are doing things. (RE3, 2022)

As emphasised above, it is understandable why the growth focused tactics gather more support. It is not only 'easier' to justify actions and strategies but it is also the importance of demonstrating that there is the constant battle against shrinkage. There is the perception that adapting or succumbing to shrinkage and planning for it is seen as a sign of defeat (UP4, 2022). On the other hand, fighting an endless battle and striving for growth can be seen in a positive light and as a sign of hope, even if it may not be reasonably possible.

It is important to question whether accepting and adapting to shrinkage is a sign of 'giving up'. There needs to be an understanding that acceptance is not giving up but the trajectory of the city and adapting through smart planning tactics and measures would be a sensible alternative (Newman et al., 2018). It would perhaps even provide more hope and strength in being able to openly accept to the community that this is the direction of the future and being able to plan and direct resources appropriately (UP5, 2022).

5.4.1 Focused growth and the 'ideal' residents

In order to attract growth, many cities rely on the ability to develop the city centre and enhance the attractiveness of the built environment (Acharya & Rahman, 2016). Shrinkage often leads to the migration pattern of residents from the countryside or rural outskirts to the local city centres. The importance of directing resources and efforts to further developing and enhancing the city centres has become a key tactic for urban planners in attracting residents (UP1, 2022). This can manifest in many forms from new investments to opportunities focused on diversifying industries and niches.

We are striving to rebrand the city [...] it comes back to the new plans and investments in the city centre. We hope that this will gain global attention as well as attract people and make the city a more appealing place. (UP10, 2022)

An interesting aspect is to analyse the demographics and types of people that cities are hoping to attract through their growth strategies. Unsurprisingly, the urban planners interviewed voiced that the cities endeavour to attract the 'ideal typical family' consisting of two highly educated working parents along with their kids. The emphasis on attracting this demographic can be viewed as a sign of hope for the future, given the benefits and income that these families will bring (UP5, 2022). It is also hoped that the parents will bring taxes and income to the city, whilst their kids support the longevity of crucial facilities such as schools and other amenities (UP7, 2022). While the benefits of attracting families and younger generations are clear, interviewees also reinforced the importance of cities striving to cater for everyone thus contributing to any future growth.

For many smaller cities, the problem lies within the mismatch of employment available and the skillsets and education of residents (Hu, 2015). Evidently, this still proves to be a challenge for some cities that noted the index of workplaces compared to residents and the population was very high (UP11, 2022). The mismatch is emphasised by cities with a high workplace index, continuing to struggle with shrinkage. It raises the question and possibility of diversifying and creating new employment opportunities, which are typically focused on the capital region. This is important as employment is often one of the defining reasons of migration for many individuals which contribute to the attraction of a place (Hoogerbrugge & Burger, 2021).

5.4.2 Investing in education

In discussing key areas of focus for the attraction of residents, interviewees deemed education as a priority. The importance of education and the ability to provide education facilities from primary school through to secondary and tertiary education was clearly another important strategy and goal for cities (RE3, 2022; UP2, 2022). Whilst employment forms a key decision-making aspect for adults and the working class, those with kids also value the importance of education and good quality facilities. Education in many ways is seen as a symbol of not only the future but also a reflection of the demographics within a city. For areas that have seen shrinkage take over, schools are often one of the first services to go, meaning these students are then transferred to nearby schools (UP5, 2022).

In a way, schools and education facilities reflect success, as it means that there are kids within the area that will grow up and assist with future growth of the city. It is also a common desire that once the children grow up, they will stay and raise their own families in the same city or at the very least, move back following tertiary education (UP7, 2022). However, contrary to this ideal narrative, by the time it comes to tertiary education, many often move away for their university studies. In many cases, they often never return which is one of the most common contributing factors for demographic change amongst young adults (UP11, 2022). This highlights the importance of cities being able to not only provide the necessary education facilities but also ensure that they are competitive at a level that would encourage younger demographics to stay.

Universities and education in cities would help support the locals [...] However, they need to be competitive, and the quality needs to be able to compete with others in the world [...] at the same time you can't have universities everywhere. (RE3, 2022)

The importance of education on a national scale is also reflected through Finland's renowned education system. The role of the country's quality of life aspects, such as its education system, has and will continue to play a pivotal part in attracting people, especially beyond the country's borders (RE4, 2022). The importance of education and ensuring there are viable and diverse options to preserve the younger

demographics is highlighted in Municipality I, whereby the corporation with neighbouring cities and regions in further developing the education system forms a fundamental goal (UP11, 2022).

5.4.3 Finding a new niche and the (re)branding of cities

For some cities, the new opportunities or a second chance lies in its ability to find a new niche or its capacity to ‘rebrand’ the city. The ability to offer something new to attract people can become a major selling point through image and reputation enhancement (Acharya & Rahman, 2016). However, it often requires something new and from an urban planning perspective, this often comes in the form of new (re)developments (Hollander, 2011). This is something which cities often struggle with given that the common strategies and approaches are copy and pasted from different cities, resulting in similar developments (UP1, 2022).

Many cities have already begun to redevelop their brand and niches, based on the characteristics of the city. This may be linked to certain industries, the geographical location or other characteristics that are unique to the city (Ortiz-Moya, 2015). Some cities have interpreted this by focusing on their ability to create areas and opportunities different to what is available in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, in the hope that it will attract the people they have lost (UP2, 2022). It is interesting to highlight that when discussing the rebranding and future image of cities, most urban planners interviewed, framed the rebranding with the goal of future growth. It was only through considering the tactics of rebranding, that two interviewees highlighted the opportunities of rebranding from the perspective of post-growth.

There needs to be the use of existing infrastructure in better and different ways [...] some cities have developed great culture and art centres [...] this is the way forward for many towns [...] old places for new ideas. (RE1, 2022)

There is room for this kind of thinking where it is not about bureaucracy but towards being the best place for people to live, pursue their ambitions and have meaningful lives [...] there are also initiatives for carbon neutral cities [...] municipalities need to note they can’t be the place for everyone, but they can be the best place for some people [...] striving for quality over quantity. (RE4, 2022)

For others, this process may involve completely new approaches, such as a move away from the reliance on agriculture and forestry industries and creating a new niche in tourism and art (RE1, 2022). Whilst there is no right or wrong way in developing a new perspective or ‘brand’ for the city, any efforts made to evolve for the future are more beneficial than doing nothing at all. Given the uniqueness of cities, this only further reinforces that there is no one size fits all approach when dealing with shrinkage (Bontje & Musterd, 2012).

The importance of cities being able to use the characteristics and strengths of the area or region to their advantage forms the foundation of a strong branding (UP10, 2022). The rebranding of a city and the efforts placed into new niches can further assist with future opportunities and connections to private investment. This means no longer simply relying on population growth for financial stability (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011).

City branding or rebranding is very tricky [...] the image or brand which is connected with the town is very important for the development of the town. If a town is known for a certain sport, culture or niche, it is much easier to bring investors to support this image. Investors are also a part of society, and they think in the same way. (RE3, 2022)

Various municipalities have also taken the approach of simply developing new infrastructure in the hope that this will enhance the appeal and attraction of the city. As emphasised by Hollander (2011) this is one of the most common approaches taken to rebranding and redeveloping a city. However, it is important for shrinking cities to also be able to reuse existing infrastructure and not just rely on developing or building something new as encouraged through smart shrinkage practices.

5.4.4 Smart shrinkage

Literature and international examples have demonstrated smart shrinkage and the idea of rightsizing cities as the way forward when dealing with shrinking cities (Newman et al., 2018). The research and ideas surrounding rightsizing a city for future population forecasts proves to be a viable and sensible option for shrinking cities. However, it was evident that it was not a strategy or term, which was particularly understood in great deal by any of the urban planners interviewed. The idea of smart shrinkage was only discussed and highlighted in more detail with RE2 (2022) due to the interviewee's experience and research on smart shrinkage. This is somewhat alarming as many international examples have established the benefits that can arise from taking such approaches to adapt to shrinkage (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012).

When it comes to smart shrinkage, the focus becomes not on preventing shrinkage itself, but accepting it and seeing it as the inevitable (RE2, 2022). The focus then shifts to identifying shrinkage as an opportunity, rather than an obstacle to overcome, which focuses on the quality of life indicators for its residents. Quality of life was a reoccurring point of significance when it came to the future planning of cities (RE3, 2022; UP1, 2022). So, whilst the discussion and understanding of smart shrinkage was limited, the idea that quality of life being a key area of importance, demonstrates a shift in the thinking towards the direction of smart shrinkage. However, there was hesitancy and concerns as to whether such approaches would be able to be incorporated into the existing town strategies and land use planning frameworks (UP11, 2022).

In light of the above, it is interesting that even though the interviewees highlighted the importance of quality of life for residents, it was directed towards certain areas. From an urban planning perspective, most interviewees discussed improvements to the quality of life within subcentres and the outer areas. The reason for this is justified by UP1 (2022) who discusses the importance of improving the livelihood and quality of life in subcentres within the municipality, which would in turn contribute to strengthening the main city, and further develop the core city centre.

As supposed to reversing the shrinkage trend, you would concentrate on the population that will and want to stay here [...] instead of trying to have a growth strategy, you focus on the quality of life of the people that want to stay. (RE2, 2022)

However as highlighted, without the financial backing and support that comes from growth, significant challenges arise. It often becomes strenuous to make financial decisions which leads to cost cuts and reduction in services and amenities. In the end, as opposed to improving the quality of life, it can often result in the opposite occurring (UP5, 2022). It essentially becomes a double ended sword, whereby both options become difficult to maintain and are dependent on external factors.

5.5 The rural versus urban debate

Shrinkage often transpires within the rural areas of municipalities and this is often associated with being a rural phenomenon (Reckien & Martinez-Fernandez, 2011). Most municipalities consider parts of, or at the very least, the city centre to be considered urban. From a geographical perspective, the urban planners interviewed characterised their cities as small to mid-sized cities, which are still classified as urban from a Finnish perspective. Therefore, in terms of whether the processes that are occurring in Finland, would constitute as urban shrinkage, it would ultimately depend on the context and location in which the phenomenon is being experienced and discussed in (RE4, 2022). It is important to note that the geographical and local context plays a crucial factor, given the variations in characteristics and demographics of countries and cities across an international scale.

There are the population, economy and spatial patterns of urbans shrinkage however would we call it urban shrinkage [...] the notion of urban and rural in Finnish geography is very particular because most of the country is quite rural and we have few actual urban centres. (RE4, 2022)

Contrary to the above, majority of the interviewees working as urban planners in small to mid-sized cities still characterised their cities as urban areas with an urban core. This demonstrates that the idea of urban and rural can vary significantly depending on an individual's understanding and the context. Given the smaller population size of Finland, many areas, which are considered to be urban, would perhaps not be considered the same from another country's perspective (RE4, 2022). Therefore, the

conversation shifts to a matter of what is considered to be urban or rural from a geographical scale within the local context it is being discussed, rather than an international perspective.

Whilst the political debate aspect does not form a key area of research within this study, it is appropriate to acknowledge its importance and role within the shrinkage discourse. The dilemma of the shrinkage phenomenon being perceived as only a rural issue is further emphasised at the national level regarding discussions on adapting through smart shrinkage practices (RE2, 2022).

In Finland, smart shrinkage was mentioned for the first time by Prime Minister Marin's government in the document regarding regional development strategy and planning. However, it was only linked to rural regions and has not yet been linked to urban areas [...] the issue is still very much considered to be a rural problem and in cities we do not have issues with shrinkage yet. (RE2, 2022)

Furthermore, national level intervention to assist cities experiencing shrinkage has also proven to be an area of dispute (RE1, 2022; UP10, 2022). Although municipalities are responsible for and often required to defend for themselves during times of crisis, there are some instances where external assistance is provided. This often comes from the national government in the form of financial help or from the European Union (EU) through its work with developing regional policy and providing aid (RE1, 2022). Evidently, this still seems to be topic for debate as there is a disagreement amongst stakeholders regarding the understanding surrounding what and where shrinkage is experienced. This forms a crucial aspect to the whole debate and in moving forward, will only be possible by work from the municipal levels and contributions from urban and regional policy (RE1, 2022).

Whilst the shrinkage phenomenon creates similar implications for cities, the rate and scale at which it occurs is a variable that is dependent on many other key factors at play within the city. The importance of this and the different ways in which it affects cities and municipalities is still not emphasised enough. This is particularly the case with regional policy and decision-making regarding assistance and funding for cities that are experiencing shrinkage.

The State of Finland usually gives funding to cities which suddenly lose jobs [...] the funding is for the creation of new jobs. There are many municipalities however that are shrinking slowly over time [...] it comes so slowly that people don't react or simply just ignore it. (RE5, 2022)

For cities that experience a sudden loss of industry and employment, the challenges quickly become evident. While this is sometimes the case, shrinkage is more often a slow decline over many years or decades which is what many cities in Finland are currently experiencing (RE5, 2022). This emphasises the importance of understanding the different rates and scales at which shrinkage can occur. Furthermore, it is crucial to recognise the value of financial assistance and support which can be offered to cities that experience shrinkage slowly over time and not just to those that experience a sudden crisis.

CHAPTER 6: Key Findings

The four key objectives that were established to guide and support the primary research question will be used in the following section to highlight the key findings from the study. Although the interviewees had different understandings on the discourse surrounding shrinkage, it was overall evident that the urban planners had a unified view on matters while the researchers and other relevant experts had their own. Given the implications of shrinkage, the discussion shifts to focus on what municipalities and urban planners are doing to adapt to shrinkage as it comes more prominent. In seeking to understand how the phenomenon is portrayed and what is being done at the municipal level is where the true impact of how the phenomenon affects urban planning processes come to light.

6.1 Ramifications of scale and interconnected processes

How is the shrinkage phenomenon understood and the ways it has manifested from a Finnish urban planning perspective? Nearly all small to mid-sized cities across Finland are experiencing some sort of shrinkage or at the very least, can or will see its implications beginning to emerge. For most shrinking cities, the phenomenon has manifested itself most prominently in the form of population decline. Population decline has become almost synonymous with the shrinkage phenomenon and its interpretation which was emphasised throughout the interviews, given the visible change it brings. The complexity of the shrinkage phenomenon and its interconnected processes has only contributed to the difficulties in separating itself from the other implications it brings to economic, demographic, social and infrastructure factors (Haase et al., 2016).

The administrative merger of municipalities has been a common strategy and reaction to the phenomenon. Whilst it has been anticipated that the municipal merges would improve the wellbeing and resources available to areas, it has only in some instances exacerbated the issues and placed additional pressure on cities. Given the variation in the rate at which shrinkage occurs, this has had significant issues for cities, specifically in terms of funding and resources available. For many smaller municipalities there has been the challenge of where to focus and direct resources due to the large geographical areas generated from the mergers (UP5, 2022; UP7, 2022; UP10, 2022). Interviewees highlighted the importance of being able to direct resources and planning efforts to the city core and sub centres moving forward. However, this has also ignited the disputes of which sub centres receive resources with the perception of the largest centre typically being favoured over others (UP1, 2022).

Whilst smaller municipalities attributed their population loss to the growth centres of Helsinki, Turku, Tampere and Oulu, it is important to note that shrinkage also affects these cities. Although smaller cities are experiencing different implications, it is still noted that there are similar migration patterns within some of these growth centres which has resulted in pockets of shrinkage, especially in the outer suburbs which need to be recognised (UP4, 2022).

6.2 Growth still favoured as the (only) way forward

Why is the shrinkage phenomenon associated with a (negative) connotation and stigma? The emphasis and importance of growth within the field of urban planning has created an ideal that anything contrary to this is observed in a negative light. From an urban planning perspective, the interviewees were unanimous in their opinions that the shrinkage phenomenon is portrayed with a negative perception because of the external implications it brings. The key emphasis was that shrinkage manifests itself in the form of population decline which leads to reduced resources and income, thereby influencing the services, amenities and other important factors that affect the quality of life of residents (RE2, 2022; UP5, 2022). Although there is hope and prospect to view shrinkage in a more positive manner, growth is continuously seen as the end goal. Without population growth and its perceived benefits, the challenges of resources and financial contributions continually arise, raising the question of how to break this cycle.

The majority of the urban planners interviewed observed the ‘only’ option forward was to once again be at a point of growth in order to be in a position that will support the city and its residents (UP1, 2022). However, many also noted that whilst this was the goal, it was not very wise. It is important to highlight that most interviewees identified that the municipalities that they worked in had been experiencing shrinkage slowly for extended periods of time with no sign of ‘regrowth’. Given this, it is only appropriate to acknowledge that the mind-set of constantly striving for growth may not be reasonable or even likely to happen in the future.

6.3 Missed opportunities

What strategies and actions are being taken by cities/municipalities experiencing shrinkage to adapt to shrinkage? Regardless of a city’s acceptance of shrinkage, there was the common trend that all had the same objective in mind – to strive for future growth. The continuous desire for this by cities and decision makers has hindered the opportunity to look at the shrinkage phenomenon from a different perspective. One of which would perceive the shrinkage phenomenon not as taboo, but simply as a natural phase in a city’s life cycle from the same perspective as growth (Martinez-Fernandez et al., 2012). Even with

the areas of focus and strategies which cities are directing resources, it was evident that there was little done in practice to accept or adapt to shrinkage. All plans for future developments, the branding and image of cities discussed, once again led back to the vision of growth.

For many municipalities and cities that have been impacted by the closure of an industry as part of economic and industrial transformations, the importance of being able to establish new and diverse niches unique to the city is pivotal (Leetmaa et al., 2013). There are advantages in being able to offer something never before seen and developing the city's future from a unique perspective. In doing so, this becomes a key attraction point and acts as a safeguard to protect the city with the hope that the implications of shrinkage do not worsen.

With the emphasis on quality of life being a key responsibility and goal of municipalities, it demonstrates the shift in thinking towards ideas surrounding smart shrinkage. Although still relatively unexplored in a practical Finnish context, smart shrinkage has proved to be an appropriate way forward for some international cities (Wiechmann & Pallagst, 2012). Whilst there is extensive literature highlighting the imperative need to adapt to shrinkage and shy away from the growth ideology, it is constantly being overshadowed by the 'need' for growth. If research and theoretical approaches are not being put into practice, it simply does not provide any benefits for shrinking cities. Strategies such as smart shrinkage not only reinforce the importance of learning to live and adapt to shrinkage but highlight the importance of quality of life indicators for residents (RE2, 2022).

6.4 Denial and its urban planning repercussions

How does the (negative) portrayal of the shrinkage phenomenon impact the strategic planning processes at a municipality level? One of the most significant repercussions of the negative portrayal of shrinkage is its implication on urban planning processes and the future goals of cities. The ability for urban planners and decision makers to effectively make decisions associated with shrinkage lies in their ability to openly accept and consider the implications it brings plus the strategies and methods that will be used (RE2, 2022; RE4, 2022). With the lack of acceptance surrounding the shrinkage phenomenon as something that is occurring in cities, significant questions associated with how to openly manage and adapt will remain unanswered. At the national level, there is the urgency to recognise that the phenomenon is affecting both urban and rural areas within Finland (RE2, 2022). With the hesitancy for open and transparent discussions on the matter, there will constantly be discrepancies in how to manage shrinking cities.

Evidently, there is still the implications arising from the contentious relationship between urban planners and decision makers, which is causing problems at the local planning level (RE3, 2022; UP1, 2022). Whilst the importance of the different stakeholder groups in working together is crucial, it is also important to note that urban planners should be able to take a more forefront role in the debate and management of challenges associated with shrinkage. Given the stigma surrounding shrinkage, the role and personal ideals of elected decision makers may lie more closely with their own preferences and self-preservation rather than the true wellbeing and functioning of the city (UP3, 2022; UP4, 2022; UP7, 2022). There needs to be more distinct roles perhaps even planners taking the lead on moving forward in situations where the implications of shrinkage become volatile. Given the sensitivity of the topic, the separation between the two groups during the handling of discussions may even be an appropriate way forward.

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

The history of urban planning and urbanisation being tied to growth has contributed significantly towards the negative portrayal and stigma surrounding the shrinkage phenomenon. This has affected the ways in which it is understood and how it is taken into consideration within the realm of urban planning. Evidently, the efforts being taken at the local planning level regarding shrinkage actions and debate, taking into account the influence of decision makers, has significantly impacted the effectiveness and opportunities of future planning. The research gap in understanding how this negative portrayal impacts planning processes will only increase in relevance given the population forecasts for Finland's future.

The shrinkage phenomenon presents the opportunity for cities to develop new ways to change and adapt to what is a natural phase in a city's life cycle. Furthermore, it allows for the chance to combat some of the pressing current day issues that are associated with extensive urbanisation and consumption patterns. In shifting the perspective to understand shrinkage as an opportunity for positive change, it encourages more fruitful thinking.

The measures and strategies being taken by shrinking cities still idealise the concept of regrowth in the future and to increase population as the end goal. There needs to be a change in thinking of how to adapt to shrinkage, while also recognising the importance of being able to maintain a high quality of life for residents who remain in shrinking cities, as reinforced through smart shrinkage. However, given the emphasis and growth-oriented mind-set that has become synonymous with planning, it is understandable that the attempts to adapt do not come so naturally. This crucial step of accepting shrinkage and re-orientating the ways of thinking may prove to be an even more significant challenge for urban planners than the shrinkage phenomenon itself.

7.1 Limitations to the study

While the study and the results seek to provide a deeper understanding into the portrayal of the shrinkage phenomenon and its effects on the field of urban planning in Finland, it is noted that there are limitations to the study. It is crucial to highlight that whilst certain themes, topics and language emerged from the responses of the interviewees, it does not provide a definitive answer to the questions or from the perspective of the whole Finnish urban planning field. Although efforts were made to contact a variety of urban planners, researchers and experts across different geographical locations and cities with diverse characteristics, the results of this study are still only a representation of those that participated in the research.

Although there was also the possibility to delve into the academic and policy component and its relationship to the practicalities of the shrinkage phenomenon, the study is very much based on the practical aspect of how it influences urban planning and the challenges presented to cities. Furthermore, the opinions and perceptions of residents and the community living within shrinking cities as well as the perspectives of decision and policy makers would have provided a more conclusive view towards the study. However, given the time limitations and other restraints to the study, attempting to expand the interviewee group further was deemed not to be feasible.

7.2 Suggestions for further research

Given the complexity of the research topic and the very broad scale of the urban planning field, various points of interest arose from the interviews with potential for further research on the shrinkage phenomenon. The suggestions and topics for future research that would further develop and elaborate on the existing findings from this research are as follows:

- Planning for scarcity as a part of adapting to shrinkage. How or would it be possible to ‘unplan’ and the challenges associated with planning for less when existing land use planning frameworks are developed on the premise of growth.
- Exploring the spatial mismatch of employment and jobs with the skills and knowledge available in shrinking Finnish cities. In addition, the opportunities and challenges of attracting highly educated individuals to smaller cities when companies and jobs are concentrated in the capital region.
- Analysing the quality of life within shrinking cities for existing residents and their perceptions. Quality of life indicators remains a crucial aspect to the shrinkage discourse, especially within the context of smart shrinkage.
- Understanding the importance of quality of life indicators within the shrinkage discourse. Would cities that experience shrinkage but have communities and residents that are satisfied with their lives, still be considered as shrinking?

REFERENCES

- Acharya, A., & Rahman, Z. (2016). Place branding research: A thematic review and future research agenda. *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, 13(3), 289-317. doi:10.1007/s12208-015-0150-7
- Alsaawi, A. (2014). A critical review of qualitative interviews. *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences*, 3(4), 149-156. Retrieved from <http://www.ejbss.com/recent.aspx>
- Audirac, I., Fol, S., & Martinez-Fernandez, C. (2010). Shrinking cities in a time of crisis. *Berkeley Planning Journal*, 23(1). doi:10.5070/bp323111430
- Aurambout, J.P., Schiavina, M., Melchiori, M., Fioretti, C., Guzzo, F., Vandecasteele, I., Proietti, P., Kavalov, B., Panella, F. & Koukoufikis, G. (2021). Shrinking cities. Retrieved from <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC126011>
- Barvika, S., Bondars, E., & Bondare, S. (2018). Contemporary challenges in planning for shrinkage of historic places: A review. *Architecture and Urban Planning*, 14(1), 133-140. doi:10.2478/aup-2018-0018
- Beaverstock, J. V. (2005). Transnational elites in the city: British highly-skilled inter-company transferees in New York city's financial district. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 31(2), 245-268. doi:10.1080/1369183042000339918
- Bekhet, A. K., & Zauszniewski, J. A. (2012). Methodological triangulation: An approach to understanding data. *Nurse Researcher*, 20(2), 1-11. doi:<https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2012.11.20.2.40.c9442>
- Bontje, M. (2004). Facing the challenge of shrinking cities in East Germany: The case of Leipzig. *GeoJournal*, 61(1), 13-21. doi:10.1007/s10708-005-0843-2
- Bontje, M., Sako Musterd (2012). Understanding shrinkage in European regions. *Built Environment*, 38(2), 152-161. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23799117>
- Bottà, G. (2020). *Deindustrialisation and popular music: punk and 'post-punk' in Manchester, Düsseldorf, Torino and Tampere*. London, England: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and Practice*, 2, 14. doi:10.1186/s42466-020-00059-z

- Capello, R., & Faggian, A. (2002). An economic-ecological model of urban growth and urban externalities: empirical evidence from Italy. *Ecological Economics*, 40(2), 181–198. doi:10.1016/S0921-8009(01)00252-X
- Chen, H.-P. (2002). Urban externalities and city growth in Taiwan. *The Annals of Regional Science*, 36, 531–550. doi:https://doi.org/10.1007/s001680200098
- City of Helsinki. (2019). C21 Mayors state that cities are needed to concretize Government Programme. Retrieved from <https://www.hel.fi/uutiset/en/kaupunginkanslia/c21-mayors-state-that-cities-are-needed-to-concretize-government-programme>
- Cozens, P., Hillier, D., & Prescott, G. (2001). Crime and the design of residential property - exploring the perceptions of planning professionals, burglars and other users. *Property Management*, 19(4), 222-248.
- Crowe, M., Inder, M., & Porter, R. (2015). Conducting qualitative research in mental health: Thematic and content analyses. *Aust N Z J Psychiatry*, 49(7), 616-623. doi:10.1177/0004867415582053
- Devine-Wright, P. (2009). Rethinking NIMBYism: The role of place attachment and place identity in explaining place-protective action. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 19(6), 426-441. doi:10.1002/casp.1004
- Dicicco-Bloom, B., & Crabtree, B. F. (2006). The qualitative research interview. *Med Educ*, 40(4), 314-321. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2929.2006.02418.x
- Doyle, L., Brady, A.-M., & Byrne, G. (2009). An overview of mixed methods research. *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 14(2), 175-185. doi:10.1177/1744987108093962
- Fakis, A., Hilliam, R., Stoneley, H., & Townend, M. (2013). Quantitative analysis of qualitative information from interviews. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 8(2), 139-161. doi:10.1177/1558689813495111
- Fan, Y. (2012). The planners' war against spatial mismatch. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 27(2), 153-169. doi:10.1177/0885412211431984
- Gobillon, L., Selod, H., & Zenou, Y. (2007). The mechanisms of spatial mismatch. *Urban Studies*, 44(12), 2401-2427. doi:10.1080/00420980701540937

- Gorman-Murray, A., & Bissell, D. (2018). Mobile work, multilocal dwelling and spaces of wellbeing. *Health Place*, 51, 232-238. doi:10.1016/j.healthplace.2018.04.004
- Graneheim, U. H., Lindgren, B. M., & Lundman, B. (2017). Methodological challenges in qualitative content analysis: A discussion paper. *Nurse Educ Today*, 56, 29-34. doi:10.1016/j.nedt.2017.06.002
- Greenberg, M. R. S. D. (1996). *Environmentally devastated neighborhoods: Perceptions, policies, and realities*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(3), 255-274. doi:10.3102/01623737011003255
- Haase, A., Athanasopoulou, A., & Rink, D. (2013). Urban shrinkage as an emerging concern for European policymaking. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 23(1), 103-107. doi:10.1177/0969776413481371
- Haase, A., Bernt, M., Großmann, K., Mykhnenko, V., & Rink, D. (2016). Varieties of shrinkage in European cities. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 23(1), 86-102. doi:10.1177/0969776413481985
- Haase, A., Rink, D., Grossmann, K., Bernt, M., & Mykhnenko, V. (2014). Conceptualizing urban shrinkage. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 46(7), 1519-1534. doi:10.1068/a46269
- Harris, L. R., & Brown, G. T. L. (2010). Mixing interview and questionnaire methods: Practical problems in aligning data. *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*, 15(1), 1-19. doi:10.7275/959j-ky83
- Hassard, J. (1993). *Sociology and organization theory: Positivism, paradigms, and postmodernity*. Cambridge [England] ; New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Henderson, J. V. (1986). Efficiency of resource usage and city size. *Journal of Urban Economics*, 19(1), 47-70. doi:https://doi.org/10.1016/0094-1190(86)90030-6
- Hollander, J. B. (2011). Can a city successfully shrink? Evidence from survey data on neighborhood quality. *Urban Affairs Review*, 47(1), 129-141. doi:10.1177/1078087410379099

- Hoogerbrugge, M., & Burger, M. (2021). Selective migration and urban–rural differences in subjective well-being: Evidence from the United Kingdom. *Urban Studies*. doi:10.1177/00420980211023052
- Hudson, R. (2005). Rethinking change in old industrial regions: Reflecting on the experiences of North East England. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 37(4), 581-596. doi:10.1068/a36274
- Inhanfeldt, K. R., & Sjoquist, D. L. (1998). The spatial mismatch hypothesis: A review of recent studies and their implications for welfare reform. *Housing Policy Debate*, 9(4), 849-892. doi:10.1080/10511482.1998.9521321
- Johnson, M. P., Hollander, J. B., & Whiteman, E. D. (2015). Data and analytics for neighborhood development: Smart shrinkage decision modeling in Baltimore, Maryland. In *Planning Support Systems and Smart Cities* (pp. 61-76).
- Joutsiniemi, A., Vaattovaara, M., & Airaksinen, J. (2021). Empowered by planning law: unintended outcomes in the Helsinki region. *Buildings and Cities*, 2(1), 837-855. doi:10.5334/bc.116
- Kain, J. F. (2004). A pioneer's perspective on the spatial mismatch literature. *Urban Studies*, 41(1), 7-32. doi:10.1080/0042098032000155669
- Leetmaa, K., Kriszan, A., Nuga, M., & Burdack, J. (2013). Strategies to cope with shrinkage in the lower end of the urban hierarchy in Estonia and central Germany. *European Planning Studies*, 23(1), 147-165. doi:10.1080/09654313.2013.820100
- Lehtinen, A. A. (2018). Degrowth in city planning. *Fennia - International Journal of Geography*, 196(1), 43-57. doi:10.11143/fennia.65443
- Lloyd, V., Gatherer, A., & Kalsy, S. (2006). Conducting qualitative interview research with people with expressive language difficulties. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16(10), 1386-1404. doi:10.1177/1049732306293846
- Martinez-Fernandez, C., Audirac, I., Fol, S., & Cunningham-Sabot, E. (2012). Shrinking cities: Urban challenges of globalization. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 36(2), 213-225. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2011.01092.x
- Martinez-Fernandez, C., Weyman, T., Fol, S., Audirac, I., Cunningham-Sabot, E., Wiechmann, T., & Yahagi, H. (2016). Shrinking cities in Australia, Japan, Europe and the USA: From a global

- process to local policy responses. *Progress in Planning*, 105, 1-48.
doi:10.1016/j.progress.2014.10.001
- Mays, N., & Pope, C. (1995). Qualitative research: Rigour and qualitative research. *BMJ*, 311(6997), 109-112. doi:10.1136/bmj.311.6997.109
- Mills, M. (2009). Globalization and inequality. *European Sociological Review*, 25(1), 1-8.
doi:10.1093/esr/jcn046
- Newman, G., Hollander, J. B., Lee, J., Gu, D., Kim, B., Lee, R. J., . . . Li, Y. (2018). Smarter shrinkage: A neighborhood-scaled rightsizing strategy based on land use dynamics. *Journal of Geovisualization and Spatial Analysis*, 2(2). doi:10.1007/s41651-018-0018-6
- Ortiz-Moya, F. (2015). Coping with shrinkage: Rebranding post-industrial Manchester. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 15, 33-41. doi:10.1016/j.scs.2014.11.004
- Panagopoulos, T., & Brreira, A. P. (1978). Shrinkage perceptions and smart growth strategies. *Built Environment*, 38(2). Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23799125>
- Popper, D. E., & Popper, F. J. (2002). Small can be beautiful. *Planning*, 20-23.
- Puustinen, S., Mäntysalo, R., & Jarenko, K. (2017). The varying interpretations of public interest: Making sense of Finnish urban planners' conceptions. *Current Urban Studies*, 05(01), 82-96.
doi:10.4236/cus.2017.51006
- Rao, K. S., Nautiyal, S., Maikhuri, R. K., & Saxena, K. G. (2003). Local peoples' knowledge, aptitude and perceptions of planning and management issues in nanda devi biosphere reserve, India. *Environmental Manage*, 31(2), 168-181. doi:10.1007/s00267-002-2830-4
- Raworth, K. (2017). *Doughnut economics: Seven ways to think like a 21st-century economist*. London : Random House.
- Reckien, D., & Martinez-Fernandez, C. (2011). Why do cities shrink? *European Planning Studies*, 19(8), 1375-1397. doi:10.1080/09654313.2011.593333
- Reis, J. P., Silva, E. A., & Pinho, P. (2016). Spatial metrics to study urban patterns in growing and shrinking cities. *Urban Geography*, 37(2), 246-271. doi:10.1080/02723638.2015.1096118
- Ricci, L., Lanfranchi, J.-B., Lemetayer, F., Rotonda, C., Guillemin, F., Coste, J. I., & Spitz, E. (2019). Qualitative methods used to generate questionnaire items: A systematic review. *Qualitative Health Research*, 29(1), 149-156. doi:10.1177/1049732318783186

- Rink, D., Haase, A., Grossmann, K., Couch, C., & Cocks, M. (2012). From long-term shrinkage to re-growth? The urban development trajectories of Liverpool and Leipzig. *Built Environment*, 38(2), 162-178. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23799118>
- Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2017). The revenge of the places that don't matter (and what to do about it). *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 11(1), 189-209. doi:10.1093/cjres/rsx024
- Romer, P. M. (1986). Increasing Returns and Long-Run Growth. *Journal of Political Economy*, 94(5), 1002-1037. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1833190>
- Sánchez-Moral, S., Méndez, R., & Prada-Trigo, J. (2015). Resurgent cities: Local strategies and institutional networks to counteract shrinkage in Avilés (Spain). *European Planning Studies*, 23(1), 33-52. doi:10.1080/09654313.2013.820084
- Schokkaert, E. (2019). Review of Kate Raworth's *Doughnut Economics*. London: Random House, 2017, 373 pp. *Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics*, 12(1), 125-132. doi:10.23941/ejpe.v12i1.412
- Seymour, J. (2012). Combined qualitative and quantitative research designs. *Curr Opin Support Palliat Care*, 6(4), 514-524. doi:10.1097/SPC.0b013e328358214e
- Smyth, H. (1994). *Marketing the city: The role of flagship developments in urban regeneration*. London; New York: E & FN Spon.
- Statistics Finland. (2019). Population projection. Retrieved from https://www.stat.fi/til/vaenn/2019/vaenn_2019_2019-09-30_tie_001_en.html
- Steele, W. (2009). Australian urban planners: Hybrid roles and professional dilemmas? *Urban Policy and Research*, 27(2), 189-203. doi:10.1080/08111140902908873
- Stryjakiewicz, T., & Jaroszewska, E. (2016). The process of shrinkage as a challenge to urban governance. *Quaestiones Geographicae*, 35(2), 27-37. doi:10.1515/quageo-2016-0013
- Teivainen, A. (2021). Finland is seeing young age groups shrink faster than expected. Retrieved from <https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/20313-yle-finland-is-seeing-young-age-groups-shrink-faster-than-expected.html>

- Tessem, B., Bjørnstad, S., Chen, W., & Nyre, L. (2015). Word cloud visualisation of locative information. *Journal of Location Based Services*, 9(4), 254-272.
doi:10.1080/17489725.2015.1118566
- Tuckett, A. G. (2005). Applying thematic analysis theory to practice: A researcher's experience. *Contemporary Nurse*, 19(1-2), 75-87. doi:10.5172/conu.19.1-2.75
- Upadhyay, H., Kelman, I., J, L., Mishra, A., Shreve, C., & Stojanov, R. (2015). Conceptualizing and contextualizing research and policy for links between climate change and migration. *International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management*, 7, 394-417.
doi:10.1108/IJCCSM-05-2014-0058
- Vaismoradi, M., Turunen, H., & Bondas, T. (2013). Content analysis and thematic analysis: Implications for conducting a qualitative descriptive study. *Nursing and Health Sciences* 15(3), 398-405. doi:10.1111/nhs.12048
- Walford, G. (2005). Research ethical guidelines and anonymity. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, 28(1), 83-93. doi:10.1080/01406720500036786
- Wang, D., Du, Z., & Wu, H. (2020). Ranking global cities based on economic performance and climate change mitigation. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 62. doi:10.1016/j.scs.2020.102395
- Weckroth, M., Ala-Mantila, S., Ballas, D., Ziogas, T., & Ikonen, J. (2022). Urbanity, neighbourhood characteristics and perceived quality of life (QoL): Analysis of individual and contextual determinants for perceived QoL in 3300 postal code areas in Finland. *Social Indicators Research*. doi:10.1007/s11205-021-02835-z
- Wiechmann, T., & Pallagst, K. M. (2012). Urban shrinkage in Germany and the USA: A comparison of transformation patterns and local strategies. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 36(2), 261-280. doi:10.1111/j.1468-2427.2011.01095.x
- Wiles, R., Crow, G., Heath, S., & Charles, V. (2008). The management of confidentiality and anonymity in social research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(5), 417-428. doi:10.1080/13645570701622231
- Xue, J. (2021). Urban planning and degrowth: a missing dialogue. *Local Environment*, 1-19.
doi:10.1080/13549839.2020.1867840

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Definitions

The following definitions provide meanings to some of the key words and terminology used throughout this thesis. Whilst the definitions can vary significantly depending on an individual's understanding, these terms have been described from the context of the thesis topic and from the perspective of a Finnish urban planning context.

Growth centres: *cities or regions which are collecting the majority of the population through migration patterns. At the local scale this includes the local urban core and at the national scale, the 'growth cities'.*

Growth cities: *in the coming decades, only several cities/regions in mainland Finland are projected to continue to grow. This includes the Helsinki Metropolitan Area (HMA), Turku, Tampere and Oulu (Statistics Finland, 2019).*

Region capitals: *the largest urban city or area and economic driver of a region.*

Small to mid-sized city: *cities with a population of 10,000 to 55,000 inhabitants. This is in reference to the Finnish context whereby the scale and population of cities is at a different scale compared to international examples and the typical description of small to mid-sized cities.*

Shrinkage: *see shrinkage phenomenon*

Shrinkage phenomenon: *a structural phenomenon affecting urban and rural areas, influenced by factors such as economic decline, demographic change, suburbanisation and structural changes (Wiechmann & Bontje, 2015). As a result, the phenomenon affects various factors to do with the development of cities including housing, the economy, labour markets and its physical infrastructure (Haase et al. 2016).*

Urban shrinkage: *shrinkage phenomenon occurring in the context of urban areas.*

Appendix B: Interview Schedule – City and Municipality Planners

1. Please introduce yourself shortly and tell me a little about your role and what you do?
2. How would you define urban shrinkage and what does it mean to you?
3. Would you consider the city to be experiencing urban shrinkage? If so, in what ways and what trends or patterns are you seeing? (e.g. population, economy, spatial, migration, built environment)
4. Is there unequal spatial development or distribution patterns within the city? Pockets of growth or shrinkage on a neighbourhood scale?
5. What implications or effects are you seeing as a result of urban shrinkage (positive and/or negative)? E.g. social issues, economic, built environment.
6. What is the city planning at the moment? Do future plans give significant weight to growth and shrinkage patterns the city is experiencing?
7. Has the city implemented any measures to adapt and address issues related to urban shrinkage? Does the city have any specific tools or strategies? e.g. Shrinking areas being addressed through smart shrinkage.
 - a. Does smart shrinkage aim for reduced urban sprawl or a more compact city?
8. Has the development and growth associated with the city's history affected urban shrinkage patterns today?
9. How do you interpret the connection between the economy and industrialisation sectors and urban shrinkage?
10. Would you consider urban shrinkage is given enough weight or importance in the field of urban planning in the city or more generally in Finland?
11. Is there the negative connotation surrounding the term 'urban shrinkage'? Is it perceived in a negative light amongst colleagues and others from an urban planning perspective, why perhaps?
12. Is the stigma towards urban shrinkage affiliated with politics and/or governance?
13. Is there a need and/or want to '(re)brand' and develop the city away from this perception towards growth? Which demographics is the city wanting to attract or plan for?
14. Are there any other points or matters you wish to discuss or raise?

Appendix C: Interview Schedule – Researchers, Consultants and Experts

1. Please introduce yourself shortly and tell me a little about your role and what you do?
2. How would you define urban shrinkage and what does it mean to you?
3. Would you consider Finland to be experiencing urban shrinkage? If so, in what ways and what trends or patterns are you seeing? (e.g. population, economy, spatial, migration, built environment)
4. In what ways and how is urban shrinkage discussed in literature? (Key themes, causal factors, indicators of shrinkage, implications etc.)
5. Is there unequal spatial development or distribution patterns (growth/decline) through Finland? Any examples?
6. Has the development and growth associated with specific cities/Finland's history affected shrinkage patterns today?
7. How do you interpret the connection between the economy and industrialisation sectors and urban shrinkage?
8. Has there been any research, tools, policies etc. to adapt and address issues related to urban shrinkage in cities/Finland?
9. Would you consider urban shrinkage is given enough weight or importance in the field of urban planning in Finland?
10. Is there the negative connotation surrounding the term 'urban shrinkage'? Is it perceived in a negative light amongst colleagues and others from an urban planning perspective?
11. Is the stigma towards urban shrinkage affiliated with politics and/or governance?
12. Is there a need and/or want to '(re)brand' and develop cities away from this perception towards growth?
13. Are there any other points or matters you wish to discuss or raise?