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Beyond Growth: Shrinking Cities as a Model for Post-Growth Societies?

Shrinking cities have spread out on all continents since the end of the last century and have become a normal type of urban development. For the post-growth perspective the question is being asked, and if yes, what can be learned from nowadays shrinking cities for the urban development in the future? One can observe that the biggest number of shrinking cities try to pursue growth strategies, this is not surprising, given the capitalist growth paradigm. In some shrinking cities there are attempts to make the best of it: to establish alternative economic concepts, housing qualities or life styles beyond traditional growth orientations. This could be the re-use of urban brownfields for urban gardening and agriculture, non-commercial interim uses of properties or collective production forms. The integration of these experiments consist considerable challenges to the actors involved. The paper elaborates if and how these experiments could be models to maintain the quality of life for the remaining population with lesser resources, services and money.

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