

博士論文（要約）

**Coping with urban shrinkage in post-industrial cities:  
an international evaluation with case studies of Manchester,  
Pittsburgh and Kitakyushu**

（脱工業都市における縮小への対応  
ー マンチェスター・ピッツバーグ・北九州市のケーススタディによる評価と考察ー）

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## Abstract

Despite the unprecedented urbanisation process, one-third of the world's cities are currently experiencing population and economic decline. Shrinking cities are the result of changes in the socioeconomic system —i. e. globalisation, neoliberalism, the rise of world-cities, gentrification— and the second demographic transition. This thesis studies the mechanisms that cities have implemented in order to cope with the causes of their shrinkage, particularly in post-industrial cities. It aims to critically assess different approaches to solve the problem of cities' decay at the source. In order to do so, this thesis follows two lines of urban scholarship that enables the understanding of shrinkage as a global phenomenon notwithstanding national contexts. First, the thesis theoretically positions itself in line with human geography scholars who focused on the spatial relations between society and economy. Of particular influence for the present study are Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, Edward Soja, Allen J. Scott and Saskia Sassen, whose work has shaped the theoretical backbone of the thesis. Second, the thesis follows a particular line of urban shrinkage scholarship —that of Karina Pallagst, Cristina Martinez-Fernandez, Philipp Oswalt or Simone Audiract. This approach to shrinking cities —in conjunction with the more general urban problems analysed by the above-mentioned human geographers— understands urban shrinkage as the spatial manifestation of globalisation and post-Fordism. Hence, this thesis redefines shrinking cities as the spaces which are no longer capable of underpinning the economic functions of contemporary Capitalism and therefore, resulting in structural problems that ultimately foster out-migration of the population.

The different urban realities of shrinking cities call for a distinct analytical perspective in order to understand this new urban condition. Previous assumptions about what is urban lose their validity when facing the complex problems caused by and resulting from urban shrinkage. Shrinking cities, as it has

been said of contemporary capitalist expansion, do not represent a rupture with previous urban development models; rather, they are the necessary restructuring that results from the transition from one phase of economic development to another. This evolution has its effects on the physical, social and economic fabric of the city. Nonetheless, this holistic transformation —as in the urban reality all the aspects of city life are interconnected— usually is fragmentally studied, focusing only on particular aspects of different case studies without any relation between different cases or contrasting geopolitical contexts. This thesis aims to address this gap in the literature by doing a comparative cross-national analysis of urban shrinkage.

The thesis, therefore, aims to analyse how post-industrial shrinking cities are coping with the causes of their decline. In order to do so, it uses a case study methodology. The three case studies are Manchester, UK; Pittsburgh, USA; and Kitakyushu, Japan. The different socioeconomic and political contexts of each case allows the thesis to explore the relation between national and regional contexts and the multiple scales of policies that are in play when grappling with urban shrinkage. Each case study city is approached through a geo-historical perspective to construct

each case study profile; the profiles are organised in a similar fashion, exploring the national context and its urban system, the reasons of each city's growth, the causes of urban shrinkage, the measures that have been implemented and its effectiveness. The subsequent analysis of coping mechanisms is based on these geo-historical profiles, and therefore, they become the leading characters of the argument posed in this thesis. Due to the multidimensional character of the phenomenon, the evaluation framework analyses both, qualitative and quantitative data. First, quantitative data —census statistics— provides measures of the extent of the problem, offering highlights on the causes and effects of urban shrinkage. Second, qualitative data —historical records, media coverage, direct observations, other studies, etc— nuances the decay or recovery assertion. The combination of both sets of data enables the critical evaluation of the different approaches and allows suggesting policy recommendations to deal with urban shrinkage. Based on this analysis, the thesis re-evaluates the current terms of measuring urban development —whether growth or shrinkage— arguing that making growth and end in itself cannot solve the drivers of decay or the problems derived from it.

My research intervenes in current debates on mechanisms to cope with urban shrinkage. Adopting a comparative perspective with case studies from different socioeconomic and political contexts, it shows that despite the different conditions cities are following the same regeneration mechanisms; nevertheless, they are not succeeding in reversing the shrinkage process and ameliorating its consequences. This approach brings social aspects back into the analysis, and calls for new planning solutions that challenge the assumption of 'growth equals good' notwithstanding the social costs of this growth. The aim of policies coping with urban shrinkage would be not only to return to the growth paradigm, but to improve quality of life and liveability in cities.

Based on the experience learnt from my case studies, the thesis develops a new planning paradigm. Through the concept of Soft Shrinkage I intend to create new planning mechanisms that will manage decline by solving the social problems provoked by urban shrinkage. Soft shrinkage is based on seeing potential in the conditions of shrinkage that are usually understood as liabilities. It takes the potential hidden in derelict spaces, abandoned industrial buildings or rundown neighbourhoods, transforming them in order to improve the quality of life of the city's inhabitants. Ultimately, Soft shrinkage seeks to create the conditions for a planning paradigm that is non-normative, bottom-up, collective-driven and radically re-appropriates spaces. It focuses on communities, empowering neighbourhoods by creating better living conditions. More importantly, soft shrinkage sees the potential hidden in shrinking cities and invites for creative interventions to be developed in line with official regeneration initiatives.