

# Urban restructuring in former industrial cities

## Urban planning strategies

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### Résumé

Les transformations économiques globales et la réorganisation de la production des dernières décennies du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle ont mené de nombreuses villes industrielles en Europe et aux États-Unis à la crise. La portée et la persistance de ces processus du déclin introduisent autant la question du futur des villes industrielles en déclin que celle de la capacité d'intervention de l'aménagement urbain. L'évolution de beaucoup de villes industrielles dans lesquelles la crise s'est prolongée jusqu'à aujourd'hui, malgré les efforts locaux pour l'empêcher, pourrait nous amener à penser que le déclin urbain est un procès irréversible. Cependant, la récupération progressive de certaines villes industrielles européennes dans les dernières années signale des possibilités locales de réaction face aux dynamiques globales. Les trajectoires divergentes des villes industrielles peuvent seulement être comprises en se référant à la singularité de chaque territoire. Ces processus de renouvellement ont dévoilé l'importance de l'action locale et la possibilité de maîtriser le déclin. Ils révèlent aussi le rôle de l'aménagement et des politiques urbaines locales. Cet article analyse certaines stratégies de renouvellement des villes industrielles en Europe.

**Mots-clés :** aménagement urbain, déclin, ville industrielle, stratégies urbaines, renouvellement, Europe

"L'avenir des villes ne se lit pas dans leur passé, aussi glorieux soit-il, mais dans la confrontation tendue de leur présent et de leurs lendemains" (Paquot, 2010: 83)

### INTRODUCTION

Global dynamics such as economic transformations and reorganizations of production led to the crisis of many former industrial cities in Europe and the U.S in the last decades of the 20th century. Most of them have suffered or are still suffering from urban decay and shrinkage. The severity and persistence of some of these processes have called into question both the future of these cities and the ability of urban planning to deal with decline.

### Abstract

Global dynamics such as economic transformations and reorganizations of production led to the crisis of many former industrial cities in Europe and the U.S in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of them have suffered or are still suffering from urban decay and shrinkage. The severity and persistence of some of these processes have called into question both the future of these cities and the ability of urban planning to deal with decline. The trajectory of some industrial cities, whose crisis has persisted despite local efforts to confront it, could lead to regard decline as an irreversible process and to accept the impossibility of urban planning to intervene in it. Nevertheless, the gradual restructuring of some European industrial cities in recent years, seem to point toward the relevance of local response to global dynamics. Different paths of development may only be explained from the distinctiveness of each territory, specific local decisions and successive strategies to tackle decay. These processes of revitalization seem to reveal the importance of local action and the possibility of guiding and easing decline. Even more, they point out to the crucial role of planning. These experiences show different ways to tackle decay. This paper aims to explore the role of certain planning strategies on guiding the futures of industrial regions.

**Keywords:** decline, urban planning, industrial city, shrinking cities, Europe

When Philipp Oswalt asked, referring to shrinking cities, "Can planning even help?" (Oswalt, 2005: 15), he reflected on the role of urban planning in a process of decline, strongly determined by external dynamics, decisions and circumstances. The trajectory of some industrial cities, whose crisis has persisted despite local efforts to confront it, could lead to regard decline as an irreversible process and to accept the impossibility of urban planning to intervene in it.

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**L Reisser**



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*Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich ,1967*      Restructuring Of Physical Sciences In Europe And The United States - 1945-1960, The - Proceedings Of The International Conference Michelangelo De Maria, Mario Grilli, Fabio Sebastiani, 1989-06-01

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