Urban shrinkage in Parkstad Limburg

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Content

- The academic & political debate
- Shrinkage and planning response in the Netherlands
- Case: Parkstad Limburg
- Conclusion & discussion
The academic & political debate (1)

- Shrinkage as one of the emerging research agendas in planning, geography & other social sciences
- Debate becomes more international (e.g. SCIRN, CIRES, OECD, EC...)
- Our focus: what is adequate planning response to shrinkage?
- Farke (2005): four types of perception of shrinkage: ‘ignoring’; ‘observation without acceptance’; ‘certain acceptance’ (authorities deliberate how to cope with decline); ‘acceptance’
- Also described by others as ‘mourning process’
The academic & political debate (2)

- From ‘traditional’ growth-oriented planning towards shrinkage management
- No general ‘recipe’! Strategies should be place-specific
- Some aspects to be considered: pace & scope of shrinkage; housing market; legal and political context; expected changes in local public services demand;...
- Path dependence of urban / regional development
- Added value of ‘soft’/’alternative’ planning tools? Oswalt (2005): culture, communication, networks
Shrinkage and planning response in the Netherlands (1)

- Large cities were shrinking fast (mass suburbanisation) 1960s-1980s, but are growing again and predicted to be main growth poles next decades
- Recent shrinkage mainly in ‘periphery’, border regions
- Mostly rural areas, but one urbanised area too: Parkstad Limburg
- Dutch population will keep growing next 2-3 decades, but increasing share of stagnating and declining areas
Growth & shrinkage
Netherlands
2008-2025

Source: CBS / PBL 2009
Shrinkage and planning response in the Netherlands (2)

• From a local / regional issue to a national political priority
• 2009: national shrinkage strategy
• National-regional-local collaboration: plan ‘Shrinkage with Quality’ (‘Krimpen met kwaliteit’)
• Regional action plans: Parkstad Limburg, Northeast Groningen, Zeeuws Vlaanderen
• Founding of Knowledge Centre Population Decline (Kennis-centrum Bevolkingsdaling); Knowledge Node Population Decline (Kennisknooppunt Bevolkingsdaling); and NEIMED: Dutch Knowledge Institute Societal Effects Demographic Shrinkage)
Case: Parkstad Limburg

History and geography

After a decade of denial, shrinkage is now accepted and adopted in policy...

... however, it is still a topic for policy-makers; inhabitants are hardly involved
Causes of shrinkage in Parkstad Limburg

Economic factors
Demographic factors
Political factors
Socio-cultural factors
Policy response in Parkstad Limburg

Economic activity
  Need for public-private
Housing market
  Financial bottleneck
Policy reflexes
  Need for leadership
Alternative planning tools
  IBA
Conclusion and recommendations

Accepting shrinkage
Long-term future vision
Restructuring the housing market
Inhabitants need to be informed and included
Political leadership & regional collaboration
Questions & discussion

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