

**CHAPTER 27:**

**A PLACE TO BE PROUD OF:  
HERITAGE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION  
IN SHRINKING CITIES  
(GERMANY AND UNITED KINGDOM)**

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## Introduction

Many old industrial areas of Europe and beyond have seen population numbers fall. When the numbers of households also starts to drop, demand for housing decreases. This may result in high numbers of empty dwellings, especially when either the houses themselves or the areas in which they stand are unattractive. In countries like Germany and the United Kingdom, governments (both local and national) have recognised this as a problem and developed strategies to deal with it.

Contrary to regeneration strategies in the 1960s that focused on demolishing old dwellings and building new modern ones, by the 1990s more attention was given to the cultural value the existing dwellings may have, especially for the people living there. In England for instance, “English Heritage (a government agency responsible for the historic environment) has adopted a number of social inclusion goals that, amongst other things, emphasise the cultural diversity of England’s heritage and the need to enable access, in its widest sense, to this legacy” (Pendlebury et al., 2004). This means that buildings and neighbourhoods survive, not just as a memory of the past but also as a way to build or improve community spirit (by not destroying existing neighbourhoods and their social networks and by organising social events and including local people, for instance as volunteers to show visitors around).

This chapter studies the use of heritage in the regeneration of old industrial cities with a shrinking population, by taking Germany and the United Kingdom as examples.

Germany, that now has a shrinking population, started experimenting with ways to cope with the phenomenon of shrinking in the late 1980s. The United Kingdom still has a growing population; nevertheless some regions, like the Northwest, have been shrinking for several decades. Here, new policies to cope with the problem of low housing demand and the symptoms that go with it were developed from 1999 onward.

Both countries have conceived a whole array of policy documents and tools to fight the negative consequences of population decline. Two of these tools include, more than the other ones, attention to cultural heritage and the role this can help make urban regeneration more social inclusive: the German “building exhibitions” (IBAs) and the English “housing market renewal pathfinders”. This chapter will focus on these two sets of tools and especially on projects that aim to reuse existing dwellings to help revive an area. Chimney Pot Park within the Manchester Salford Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder area and Schüngelberg Garden City, part of the IBA Emscher Park, will be taken as examples. Before moving on to these projects each section will start with a general description of the area, followed by a short discussion of the main goals of the policy tool involved.

### Germany: IBA Emscher Park

The Ruhr area is a good example of a former industrial region that has lost most of its industry and some of its population (Table 27.1). As early as the second half of the 1950s, the first signs of the retreat of traditional heavy industry became visible, with restructuring plans concentrating on a diversification of the economic structure, with coal mining and the steel industry still playing an important role.

Table 27.1. Population decline in selected cities within the Ruhr area

City	Population 1961	Population 2000	Population 2009	1961-2009	1961-2009
Duisburg	663 147	514 915	491 931	-171 216	-26%
Essen	749 040	595 243	576 259	-172 781	-23%
Gelsenkirchen	382 842	278 695	259 744	-123 098	-32%
Ruhr area (RVR)	5 674 223	5 359 228	5 172 475	-501 748	-9%

Source: [www.metropoleruhr.de](http://www.metropoleruhr.de).

During the 1980s, a more radical approach was adopted. In 1989 the IBA (*Internationale Bauausstellung* – International Building Exhibition) Emscher Park was founded by the regional state of North Rhine-Westphalia and 17 local authorities, all situated in the northern part of the Ruhr area. Total investment was more than EUR 2.5 billion, about a third of which was provided by the private sector (Shaw, 2002). Goals included improving and restoring the natural environment, finding new uses for industrial buildings and improving the existing housing stock. Aspects of the latter goal that are related to social inclusion were “participation by civil society, social interaction in the planning process, and provision for housing for people on low incomes” (Shaw, 2002).

Thus, apart from flagship developments like the opening of new museums and the creation of big landscape parks, IBA Emscher Park also included the regeneration of (social) housing estates, including 30 garden cities.

The Ruhr area is one of the most densely populated areas in Germany. Still, the urban landscape is a mixture of city centres, many of them destroyed during World War II and rebuilt with new 1950s facades and street plans, old and new neighbourhoods, interspaced with large-scale industrial estates, and some remaining village centres, agriculture and woodland. Canals, railways and motorways were built to connect, but at the same time are separating, neighbourhoods from urban centres and from each other.

To house the growing population during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, several new neighbourhoods were built, including more than 20 garden cities. Unlike the original Howard scheme, garden cities in industrial areas hardly take the form of independent cities with only rather weak relations with the main urban centre which they have come to relieve, by decreasing population density and urban squalor. Instead, there are three reasons why many garden cities were built close to the coal mines and factories (Beierlorzer and Boll, 1999):

1. The need to attract a new working force. These people, mostly from the eastern provinces of Germany and Poland, were mainly peasants; in order to attract them, something of a rural village life had to be created.
2. Social engagement by some of the major companies. The new urban neighbourhoods of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were quite often overcrowded. In order to have a fit and loyal workforce, and to avoid social unrest, many companies built their own garden cities.
3. Catering for the special needs for people working in heavy industry and reducing the distance between work and dwelling. At a time that passenger transport links were still poor, it was important to live close to where one worked.

Therefore, the garden cities of the Ruhr area feature large gardens. Often they are situated close to a coal mine or big factory. They are a quiet oasis in an often noisy and dirty environment. And they are places where everyone knows each other and shares the same experiences. Now, more likely than not, the factory or coal mine is closed. Groups of immigrants with different cultures have moved in. The area will possibly have seen a period of decay and plans to tear down some or even all dwellings. After a scheme to demolish the *Eisensiedlung* (Iron Town) in Oberhausen was abandoned in the 1970s because of popular opposition (see e.g. Raines, 2011), garden cities were increasingly seen again as providing good and affordable living. In the end, many of them were regenerated with public subsidies, often as part of the IBA Emscherpark. Schüngelberg in Gelsenkirchen is a good example.

Schüngelberg consisted of about 300 dwellings and was built between 1897 and 1919 for the colliers of neighbouring coalmine “Hugo”. Between 1916 and 1919 a plan was developed to extend the garden city with a further 200 dwellings. However, due to economic reasons, this development never took place.

Demolition of the estate was planned in the 1970s, but prevented by the inhabitants. However, it remained unclear what would happen in the long run (Beierlorzer and Boll, 1999).

The IBA made it possible to refurbish the existing dwellings of Schüngelberg. It was also decided to finally build the 200-dwelling extension. The increased population made it possible to create a village centre. In the new part of the estate, the original street plan, characterised by winding streets, was not kept. Instead, it was decided to create long straight streets, many of them offering a view to the neighbouring slag heap (*Halde*) which was changed into a park with a monument on top. Improving the environment was also part of the project, with the local brook playing an important role in cleaning wastewater, while at the same time providing a green border to most of the estate (Beierlorzer and Boll, 1999; own observations).

It was attempted to include the Turkish community, which had also come to live in the area, in the consultation and decision-making process (Beierlorzer and Boll, 1999). However, according to Waltz (2007), the communal garden, which played an important role in Turkish community life, was destroyed to make way for the new dwellings; also rents were increased, without dwellings becoming any larger and without paying attention to the specific needs of the local people. “The only thing Turkish about it was the name of the street, which ran through the former communal garden: ‘*Tepe*’ Street = Mountain Street, the result of a competition. This was the successful participation by the migrant community!”

### **England: Manchester/Salford Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder**

Although contrary to Germany England does not have a shrinking population, housing market problems can be quite extreme in some areas where almost all industrial employment was lost. In some streets and for some types of dwellings, demand became virtually non-existent. This was especially the case in parts of northern England. In this part of the United Kingdom the population had been shrinking for several decades. In the Northwest (Greater Manchester, Lancashire, Merseyside) e.g. between 1990 and 2000 the number of inhabitants declined by 2.3%. In many cities, like Manchester (-10.4%) and Salford (-6.4%), the loss of population was even worse. During the same ten years in England as a whole, the population grew by 6.9%. From 2000 until 2010, the population of the Northwest remained roughly stable, with some cities like Manchester having a small population gain, while Liverpool was still shrinking.

The government’s response to this problem was to set up nine “market renewal pathfinders”. These pathfinder areas are specific areas that receive government money to help them solve their housing market problems (see ODPM, 2003).

Initially the government created a GBP 500 million fund for a three-year period, which was extended twice with more funding available. In 2010, the newly elected government announced that a review of the Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders (HMRPs) was under way. The scheme was abolished in March 2011.

The HMRPs focused on demolishing empty dwellings and making the remaining dwellings (existing or newly built) more attractive. According to Cameron (2006), HMRPs also aimed at “changing the make-up of the population, with less emphasis than earlier place-based programmes on improvement for the existing population”. He continues to state that housing market renewal promises “engineered gentrification and the replacement of a substantial part of the existing population by households with higher income and social status.”

In the case of the Manchester/Salford HMRP, according to the Audit Commission (2008), there seems to have been a change of focus. Originally, the aim was “to build stable, sustainable communities, where housing and social infrastructure meets the need of all”. Later a new element was added: supporting “the

economic growth potential of Manchester City Region by creating neighbourhoods of choice that meet the needs of existing residents and are attractive to new and former residents.” And although “the pathfinder has generally promoted mixed communities by improving each neighbourhood for existing residents”, it is also noted that “in some areas new homes are markedly different to the existing housing offer, and principally aimed at a more affluent market” (Audit Commission, 2008).

Chimney Pot Park in central Salford was regenerated by Urban Splash, a UK architectural and marketing company well known for its regeneration projects in run-down urban areas. Terraced family houses are completely refurbished, with only their front facades being maintained. The idea is to keep the architectural heritage of the area, at the same time providing modern dwellings with all the mod cons. Originally, it was intended to keep more of the original structure in place, but for fiscal reasons the plans were changed. In the United Kingdom, VAT (value-added tax) must be paid for the refurbishment of dwellings, while new building is exempt from VAT. By demolishing all but the front facades, the estate could be classified as “new”. (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, n.d.)

In all, 227 dwellings would be built, with total development costs around GBP 34 million, including GBP 11 million provided by the public sector (of which GBP 7.3 million as part of the Manchester/Salford Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder).

Some local pathfinder managers, when speaking off the record, were quite critical about the amount of public money being spent on a relatively small-scale project, although at the same time admitting that both the project itself and the attention it got, have helped to put Salford in the spotlight. Still, they indicated that it was not their decision to ask Urban Splash to help redevelop the estate. Instead, as one of them put it, “there was some pressure from above”. Indeed, the then Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, who was born and raised in the area, told *The Times* (4 July 2008):

I dragged Tom Bloxham, the head of Urban Splash, around the area on three rainy Saturday mornings and said he had to help us. He kept saying: “Nothing I can do, Hazel, nothing I can do.” Eventually he said he would give it a go.

The new dwellings, with parking facilities at ground floor level covered by gardens, feature “upside down” layouts, with bedrooms at the ground floor. Many dwellings have open plan kitchens at the second floor. They are aimed both at first-time buyers, not necessarily traditional families with children, and people wanting to stay in or return to the area (e.g. former residents of the dwellings that used to be here). Phase 1 was completed in 2008 and consisted of 108 dwellings. Although more dwellings were bought and people had to move out, work on Phase 2 seems to have come to a halt, due to the economic crisis that hit Britain from 2008/09.

The Chimney Pot Park development does attract some criticism from the local community. People who lived in the houses that were to be converted, but could not afford to return in the new “upside down” dwellings, had to move to other existing dwellings. Although they got some help from the municipality, they do not always feel they are better off than before. Others are angry about the amount of public regeneration money that was spent to make it all possible. Even if all 227 dwellings would be built in the end, and if the total investment of public money would still be limited to the GBP 11 million intended, this still amounts to a subsidy of GBP 50 000, or about EUR 60 000 a dwelling “for a return to the community of not a single affordable home in the first phase. That’s a scandal.” (Kingston, 2006)

The *Salford Star*, a local independent newspaper and website, tells many stories of people being evicted from their homes and relocated to homes that are either worse or more expensive. After demolition, plots of land often remain vacant for a long time. If new dwellings are being built, these are often aimed at

more affluent newcomers, like people working for the BBC and other media companies in the new Media City UK development in nearby Salford Quays (Salford Star, n.d.).

## Conclusion

The regeneration of Schüngelberg, as part of the IBA Emscher Park, and that of Chimney Pot Park, part of the Manchester/Salford HMRP, have a lot in common. Both are building on the (architectural) heritage of the area, both are partly funded by public money. Both are a combination of the retaining of existing structures and new building, albeit in a different way. And both are at least partially aimed at the local population, people who are living or used to live in the area, although the aim of social inclusion is more clearly stated in the case of the IBA Emscher Park.

The Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders and the IBA Emscher Park are both claimed to be a success, although it may be too early to tell, especially for the pathfinders. About the IBA Emscher Park, it can be said that it helped change the image of the area from grey industrial wasteland to something of a tourist attraction. This was again stressed by the Ruhr area being one of Europe's cultural capitals in 2010. Maybe the key to its success is the combination of the IBA being a large-scale project and at the same time a combination of over 100 small projects, all sharing some general goals, but also being responsive to local opinion and needs. The Housing Market Renewal Pathfinders seem to be more top-down than the IBA was, and more concentrated on change (e.g. attracting newcomers to the cities involved) than on tradition.

Both the IBA Emscher Park and the Manchester/Salford HMRP have goals, although written down in different ways, which have to do with promoting social inclusion. Both projects have been criticised, however, for not being socially inclusive. In Schüngelberg, it was mainly the lack of involvement of the Turkish community that was criticised. Chimney Pot Park is seen by parts of the local community as an attempt to drive the poorer people out and replace them by a more affluent population.

Social inclusion usually is just one of the goals of a regeneration project. It has to compete with other goals, like attracting a new workforce, as was especially the case in Salford. Also, it is hard to assess if social inclusion as a goal is being achieved. Usually, it is written down in a quite general way, which makes it difficult to measure the outcome. For instance, as far as participation by local people is concerned, is it enough if there was a consultation process, or should citizens have a final say in the project? So at least, if social inclusion is a goal, it should be clear from the beginning what is really meant by it and how results will be evaluated.

**For policy makers, some lessons can be learnt from the above:**

1. Social inclusion is not just about the end result but also about the process. Involving people by giving them a say in what is going to happen will help to build trust in the community and may influence individual decisions about staying in or leaving the area.
2. Helping people to better understand how society works and how they can improve their own lives can be part of the learning process.
3. Finally, in order to understand if a project has helped to reach its social inclusion goals, these goals should be clearly stated, so output can be measured.

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