

„The Sleeping Beauty Principle“

Dipl.-Ing. C. Dissmann

Beitrag zu der Internationalen Konferenz „Leeres Land und bunte Stadt? Räumliche Differenzierung im Zeichen des demografischen Wandels“ am 7.-8. Mai 2009 in Berlin.

Based on the observation that the socioeconomic polarisation in Germany segregates prospering regions and cities from those in decline rather than the city from the countryside, this contribution is focussing on the specific qualities of emptiness and their implications for urban development. Emptiness, being the antithesis to our idea of dense urban life is in itself subject to dichotomic attributes such presence and absence, luxury and deprivation, order and chaos. Hence the empty city arouses ambiguous feelings, fearful anticipation of loss and decline on the one hand, utopian ideas of personal freedom and creative potential on the other side.

The “Sleeping Beauty Principle“ is a conceptual approach to work out an alternative to conventional planning strategies dealing with urban emptiness. It aims at putting temporarily unused structures in a *state of sleep* to withdraw them from public perception and safeguard them for potential reawakening.