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A Paradox of Town Spatial Development: The Growing Real Estate and Shrinking Town - a Case Study of Hsinchu County, Taiwan

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The key factors of many discussions on shrinking towns are focusing at decreasing population and declining industries. Our study, using Hsinchu County as an example, has found that part of the county (Guanxi township) is following a typical and traditional town development pattern, while somewhere else of this county (Zhubei township) shows rapid growth in real estate but with a high vacancy rate. Even though the distance between Guanxi and Zhubei is less than 20 kilometers, the spatial development phenomenon of the two townships are both "shrinking" in the same county but very different in their developing paths. This study used GIS to overlay the maps from field survey and archive data, such as real estate prices of different years, environmental hazards and disaster records, local area power consumptions, and vulnerable population data, to clarify the causes and systems behind the shrinking phenomena of the two townships and to construct a theory of "shrinking town" in Taiwan. The contribution of this study is the findings of the tangling relations of the vulnerability from land-enclosure policy, the system design of local industrial development and urban planning, and structural factors of environmental hazards.

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