

Post-Growth Municipalism

Project title: Municipal Transformative Communities for Local Economies
Beyond Growth (MUTUAL)

Duration: January 2024 - December 2026

Institute: Institute for Environmental Social Sciences and Geography,
University of Freiburg

Funding: German Research Foundation (nb.: 528684772)

Team: Benedikt Schmid (lead), Coline Chardon, Marilou Binder, Rieke
Schneider

What is the goal of the project?

The MUTUAL project examines the role of **economic growth in cities** and develops strategies to make cities **less dependent on economic cycles**. The aim is to identify what enables cities to place sustainability, resilience, and needs-fulfillment at the center of urban development, rather than subordinating them to growth pressures.

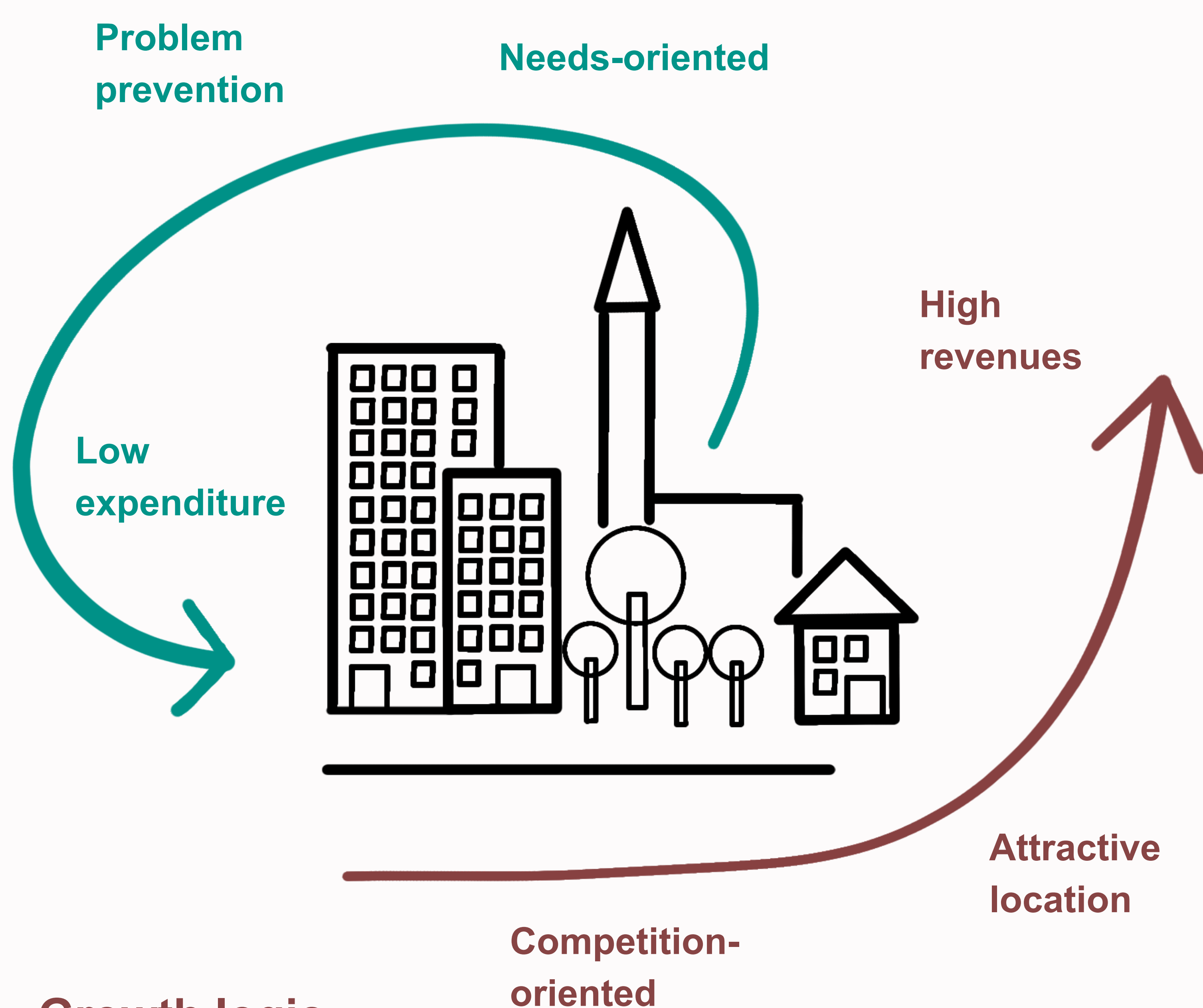
Research question: How can municipalities reduce their dependence on economic growth?

Why is that relevant?

Modern societies are heavily focused on **continuous economic growth**. Any economic downturn can quickly lead to **instability**, public sector **cuts**, and increasing **inequality**. Scientific studies show that sustained economic growth is **incompatible with social and ecological goals**. We need approaches that place a **good life for all within planetary boundaries** at the center of how we plan our cities.

Think cities differently!

Preventive logic

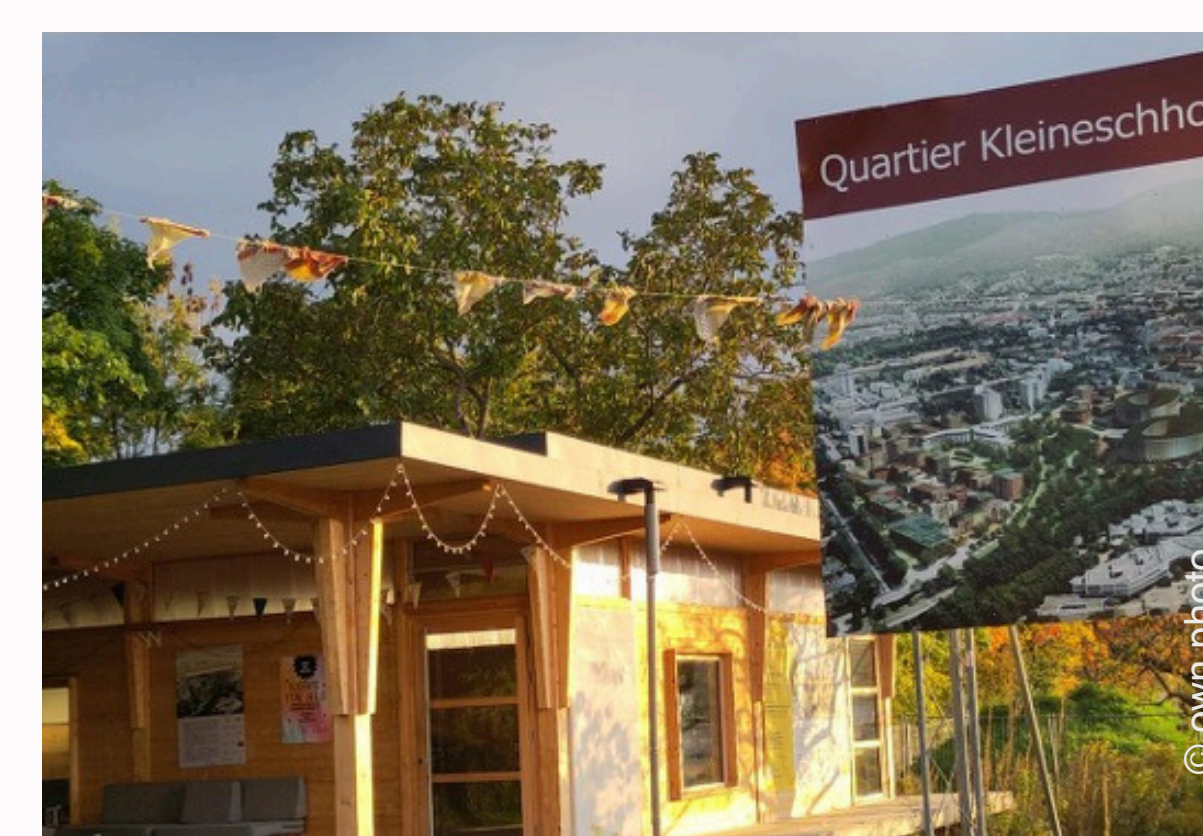


What is the project's approach?

MUTUAL is based on **two empirical case studies**:

- **Grenoble** (France)
- **Freiburg** (Germany)

Both cities pursue strategies to reduce their dependency on market and price mechanisms in areas such as public services, procurement, and urban development. These initiatives offer valuable entry points for research on **growth autonomy**.



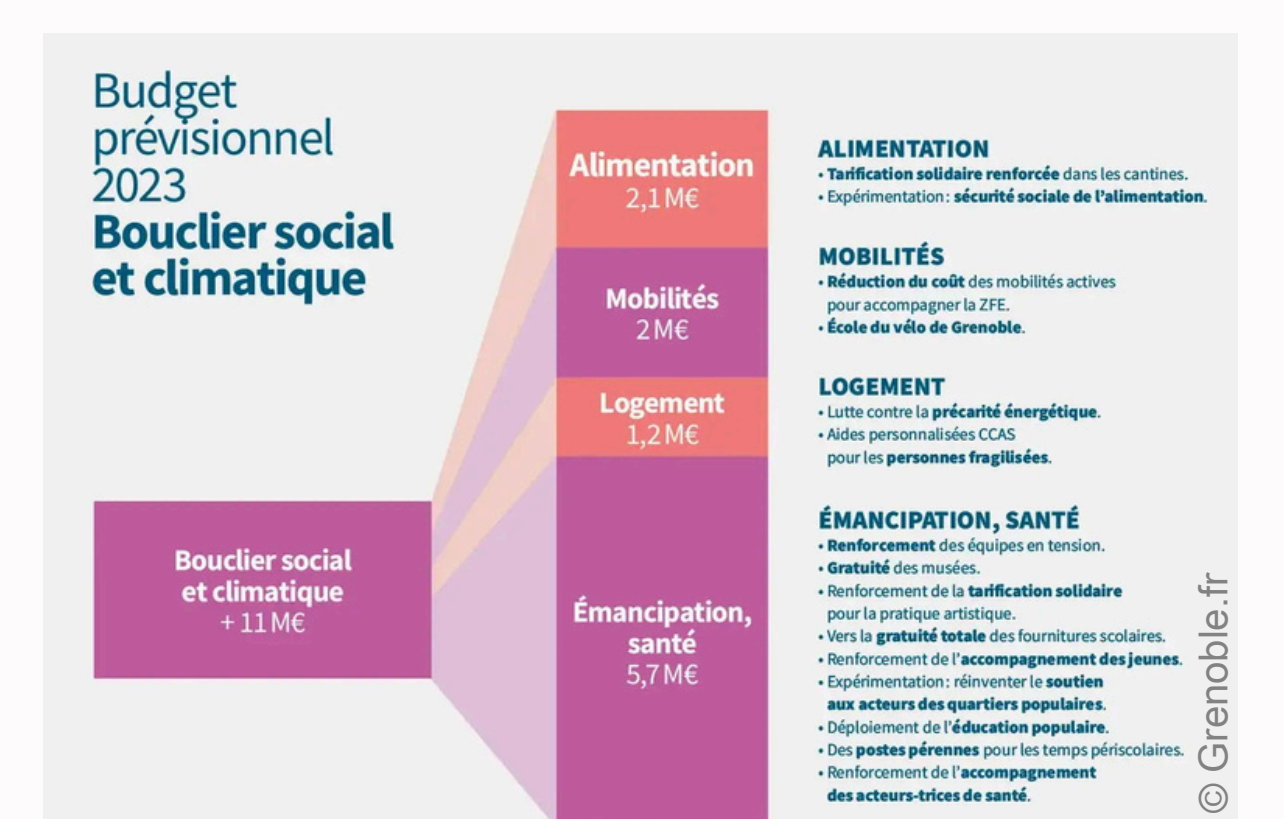
District development oriented to the common-good



Refurbishment-oriented urban renewal



Introduction of a packaging tax



Social and climate shield

Key terms

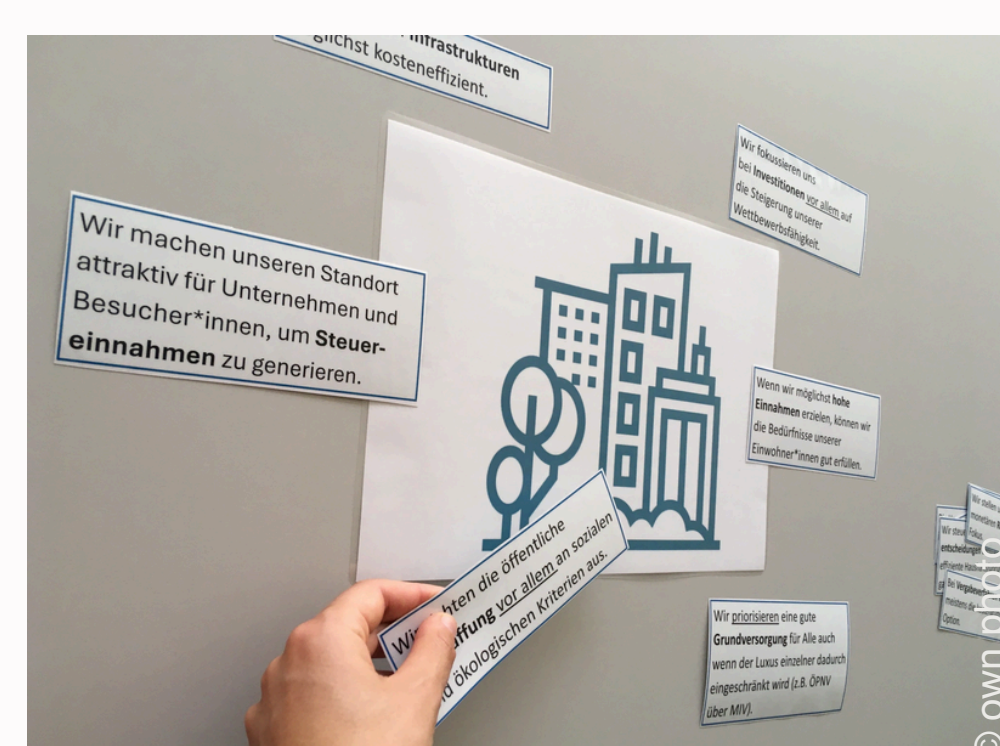
Growth Dependency:

Structural pressure on governmental, private sector, and civil society actors to align their actions with economic growth, thereby prioritizing immediate monetary costs and return on investment, competitiveness, and private sector interests.

Growth Autonomy:

A condition in which a society can determine its own growth trajectory independently of external pressures. This implies freedom from the need for continuous economic growth driven by factors such as global markets, institutional expectations, or cultural norms.

About us



More info:



DFG Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

universität freiburg

Contact:
benedikt.schmid@geographie.uni-freiburg.de