

Shrinking Cities: The Governance of Shrinkage within a European Context

Session convenor: Dr. Vlad Mykhnenko, School of Geography, University of Nottingham
(vlad.mykhnenko@nottingham.ac.uk)

Over the last few decades shrinkage has become a 'normal pathway' of urban and regional development. All across Europe, cities and regions have experienced economic downturns, out-migration and demographic imbalances and as a consequence 'urban shrinkage' has become a main challenge for urban development. This session is devoted to a series of new studies of how the challenge of shrinkage has been met by public policies and governance systems in different types of shrinking cities. Does urban shrinkage lead to or privilege particular arrangements and modes of urban governance? What effects do these urban governance arrangements and modes have on the abilities for coping with shrinkage in different urban contexts Europe-wide? By focusing on governance actors and their patterns of interaction, on structural conditions and normative frameworks, and on the outcomes of governance responses to the problems caused by shrinkage, the session will highlight vulnerabilities of the shrinking cities with regard to their dependence on external resources, contradicting and unstable governance mechanisms, and changing circumstances. Ultimately, the discussion will contribute towards a quest for a coherent approach, which could enable the cities to deal with the challenges of urban shrinkage strategically.

Papers to be presented:

1. Dr. Vlad Mykhnenko (School of Geography, University of Nottingham, UK), 'Local government finance: the governance of shrinkage in Greater Donetsk, Ukraine';
2. Dr. Matthew Cocks (School of the Built Environment, Liverpool John Moores University, UK), 'Reaction to contraction: the governance of a shrinking city - Liverpool, UK';
3. Prof. Dieter Rink (Helmholtz-Centre for Environmental Research – UFZ, Germany), 'Urban restructuring, housing and social cohesion: the governance of shrinkage in Leipzig and Halle, Germany';
4. Prof. Chris Couch (School of the Built Environment, Liverpool John Moores University, UK), 'The governance of shrinkage within a European context: towards a synthesis';
5. Discussion led by Prof. Petr Rumpel, (Department of Human Geography and Regional Development, University of Ostrava, Czechia) and Dr. Bogdan Nadolu (Department of Sociology & Anthropology, West University of Timisoara).