



CAT-ference 2019 session proposal

Title: Mobility and post-socialist urban governance

Description:

Despite the socio-spatial importance of urban mobility governance and bottom-up mobility practices, research on urban mobility has so far received marginal and at best sporadic attention in understanding the trajectories of post-socialist urban transformations. These are wrought with multifaceted challenges and disruptions during the last three decades, from large-scale investments of the socialist era, to the withering of public transport provisioning after the demise of the USSR, ever-increasing motorisation levels, poor vehicle maintenance and technical quality assurance – mobility practices in post-socialist settings are by a majority perceived as inadequate, challenging and time consuming.

Building upon the conviction that urban mobility is best understood as a ‘potential venue of new articulations of politics’ (Jensen 2009), the session will be exploring conflicting considerations of stakeholders in shaping urban mobility governance. Although post-socialist mobility governance revealed more about non-governance practices of municipal and national authorities rather than about master plans and long-term strategies – even more so against the backdrop of socialist-era investments into public transport systems – recent efforts to change urban transport systems serve as an important entry point to understand how urban politics play out in cities of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, e.g. in terms of conflictual experiences and narratives of modernisation, digitalisation and globalisation.

We believe that post-socialism constitutes not just a territory but also a set of questions and problematics with particular importance to global mobility governance debates. Here, mobility transitions have materialised, and continue to do so in most salient and contentious ways. The region is marked by sharp crisis and change, and multi-layered conditions of modernity and coloniality, which promises an exceptional density of insights and transferable outcomes. With the aim of mapping out the major contentious point of post-socialist urban mobility governance, and identify future research agendas in this direction, we welcome contributions focused on, but not limited to:

- Transport regulations and reforms;
- Mobility struggles and contentions;
- Transport-related modernisation and Europeanisation narratives;
- Equality issues, marginalisations, injustices;
- Emergence of new mobilities and how they affect practices of governing;
- Changed publicness of cities with shifts in transport modes and practices.

Please send an abstract of no more than 300 words, and a short biographical note, to any of the session organisers by the 13th of April at the latest.

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