



## CAT-ference 2019 session proposal

**Title:** 'When shrinking is the rule, not the exception' – Post-socialist shrinking cities

### **Description:**

Post-socialist countries form a new 'pole of shrinkage', where shrinking cities are considered to be the rule, rather than the exception, as they have been exposed in the last decades to the shock-like effects of economic restructuring and demographic change. While there has been a wide range of research analysing urban shrinkage in the context of the US and Western Europe, there is still a lack of understanding why and how cities in more peripheral locations shrink. This session departs from recent calls about a more rigorous theoretical and methodological scrutiny of urban shrinkage (cf. Bernt 2015; Aalbers, Bernt 2018), and aims to embed the social and spatial processes of such localities into a broader economic, political and social context, in order to uncover the role that uneven development, cyclical crises and the rescaling of the state plays. Besides a special focus on the political economic underpinnings of post-socialist urban shrinkage, there is also a need to analyse the multiple perspectives of how different social groups participate in the remaking and redefinition of these cities. The anthropology of everyday practices as 'yearnings for normal life' in the changing social and power relations coupled with the political economic analysis of urban restructuring can lead to fresh theoretical and methodological insights into the discourse on shrinking cities – especially from a region where 'shrinking' and outmigration has become one of the leading tropes of public discourse. Therefore we invite papers within the following themes:

- participation of different social groups in the remaking and redefinition of shrinking cities;
- the causes and consequences of post-socialist urban shrinkage;
- theories of urban shrinkage;
- changing social and spatial position of the marginalized groups within shrinking cities;
- narratives and perception on urban shrinkage of stakeholders on different scales;
- governing urban marginality in shrinking cities;
- comparative works on urban shrinkage;
- methodological challenges and innovation in studying urban shrinkage.

### **Session Organisers:**

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