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Centre for Comparative
History and Political
Studies



Call for papers and sessions

Space, Values and Power – Eurasian Cities and Regions in Transformation

September 16 – 18, 2018 in Kyiv (16 – excursion to Slavutych, the last atomograd/atomic town of the Soviet Union, founded in 1986; 17 and 18 – conference days)

Convenors: Ukrainian Researchers Society, Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography in Leipzig, RWTH Aachen University, Centre for Comparative History and Political Studies, in cooperation with the ira.urban network

The conference is based on the experiences of the research project "Shifting paradigms – towards participatory and effective urban planning in Ukraine, Russia and Germany", funded by the Volkswagen Foundation.

Preface: Urban and regional spaces play a manifold role in people's mind and practices. They constitute the living environment, precondition economic activity, and are subject to constant socio-political negotiations. Values and interests, power resources and relations embed and shape people's spatial thinking and doing. Space, values, and power link critical researchers and practitioners who want to understand and guide socio-material transformations. Eurasian cities and regions are of particular interest because their value systems and power structures have been challenged and changed fundamentally during the last decades: the collision of the socialist and capitalist socio-material orders, the expansion of the European project, financial crisis and austerity policies thereafter are only some of the recent challenges. These changes point to the relations and interdependencies between West and East, North and South, as well as to the need for critical discussions among researchers and practitioners on practices, values and power when (re)making and (re)thinking Eurasian cities and regions.

Objective: The conference intends to stimulate *transdisciplinary* and *interdisciplinary* dialogue, bringing together scientists of various disciplines (e.g. geography, planning, political science, sociology, anthropology) and practitioners (e.g. urban planners, civil activists, politicians, economic stakeholders). **We aim at a critical discussion on spatial transformations as contestations and negotiations of values and power relations within Eurasian cities and regions.** In particular, we are interested in a careful consideration of the broader dimensions of normativity, practiced power and materiality, their interlinkages and practical relevance:

Normativity: Urban and regional transformations are driven by both *grand normative discourses* like sustainability, liberalisation, inclusion, modernity, resilience and smartness, and by *values and interests which local stakeholders* express with regards to urban and regional planning and governance, for instance when calling for participatory planning, effective governance or social justice. What are the specifics of normative discourses, values and interests that are being voiced, contested and negotiated, transmitted and translated and how have they evolved? What are the responses and consequences for practitioners involved in spatial planning and governance?



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Practiced power: The practices of urban and regional planning, economic production, civil engagement and activism, or simply the everyday life, are (re)producing normativity, power resources and relations in space. What are the power (im)balances in practices of making and living Eurasian cities and regions? How and why have they kept up and evolved? And what can we learn from interventions of practitioners, e.g. planners, politicians or civil activists?

Materiality: Housing, infrastructures, cultural heritage, industrial sites or greenery form the material dimension of cities and regions. They are product and frame of people's minds and activities, and reflect strong linkage between past, present and future generations. What do the materialities of Eurasian cities and regions reveal about transformations, bonds and cleavages in space and society? Which opportunities and risks for the people's well-being do they bear? And how – based on which values and power -- can and will they serve best, and at whose profit?

We call for **session proposals** and **paper abstracts** that critically address issues of the values, power and materiality of spatial transformations in Eurasia, drawing on practice- and/or theory-inspired reflections on concrete topics of urban or regional spatial development. We look in particular forward to

- Proposals that help to stimulate transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary dialogue, as well as to
- Contributions that compare experiences of cities and regions within Eurasia and beyond.

Please submit **session proposals** and/or **paper abstracts by May, 30th, 2018** to Kostyantyn Mezentsev (urboconf@gmail.com) and Carola Neugebauer (carola.neugebauer@rwth-aachen.de). Paper abstracts should not exceed 250 words. Session proposals should include a session description of 300 words, the name, affiliation and contact details of the organizer(s) and a list of potential speakers and presentations. In case of any query, please don't hesitate to contact Kostyantyn Mezentsev or Carola Neugebauer.

The conference is free of charge and it will host max. 55 attendees.