

State Transformations, Spatial Austerity and the Globalization of Urban Decline In Search of Alternative Urban Policies



This conference takes place within the framework of the Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics (SASE)'s annual congress. The overarching theme of the SASE 2018 congress is “Global Reordering: Prospects for Equality, Democracy and Justice”.

<https://sase.org/>

Convenors

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French Research Institute on Japan at the Maison franco-japonaise

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Conference venue

Doshisha University

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The aim of our “mini-conference”, within the larger frame of the SASE 2018 congress, is to help illuminate current shifts in planning practices and discourses, as well as in local politics under an age of austerity, with a focus on economically depleted cities and regions.

Since the 2000s, there has been a significant increase in studies about *shrinking cities*: i.e., formerly thriving cities or densely occupied regions that experience decline of their economic and social bases, with negative effects on their landscapes and prospects for maintenance of infrastructures. Once seemingly confined to industrial cities undergoing shifts from manufacturing to a service-oriented economy, a phenomenon of deprivation seems ever present in nonmetropolitan regions that have difficulties to resist to inter-urban competition and the concentration of wealth in a selective network of global cities, in both developed and developing countries. Moreover, the usual symptoms of urban decline (job losses, housing vacancy...) have been strengthened by the enforcement of a neoliberal rationale among the actors of urban policy making, especially since the Wall Street crash of 2008. According to this rationale, it is necessary, for instance, to respond to market conditions with urban entrepreneurialism, austerity budgeting in the public sector or reduced central-local transfers towards unattractive territories.

In this context, more and more municipalities are trying to replace growth-oriented planning paradigms with “rightsizing”, “downsizing” or “compact city” measures, whose main goal is to achieve greater environmental efficiency and social equity by restructuring urban fabrics around mixed-use clusters. However, it seems that actual rightsizing can produce outcomes that contradict the progressive ideals of rightsizing theories, like disinvestment from poor neighborhoods and attempts at rekindling growth through gentrification. In this respect, is the propagation of rightsizing initiatives a way to accommodate and even legitimize an “austerity urbanism”? Or how can it pave the way to alternative, more progressive urban policies despite regimes of austerity?

More than 15 interventions will tackle these issues from various disciplinary and cross-disciplinary perspectives. In particular, the following topics will be addressed: new insights into the interactions between the dynamics of urban decline and austerity measures; interscalar conflicts revealed through the implementation of downsizing policies; sectoral studies of downsizing policies in declining areas, with a focus on housing and construction; evaluation of citizen participation or realities of ‘alternative solutions’ in attempts at mitigating the local effects of austerity.

June 23rd (Saturday), 2018

9:00-9:15 am. Introduction and welcoming by Sophie BUHNIK

▪ **Session TH10-01 – Fresh Insights on the Geography of Urban Growth and Decline in Mature Industrial Regions (I) 9:15-10:30 am**

Moderated by Sophie BUHNIK, French Research Institute on Japan at the Maison franco-japonaise

9:15–9:45 am. Out of Sight and Overlooked: Shrinking US Suburbs
By Maxwell HARTT, Cardiff University

9:50-10:20 am. Viewpoints on Establishing Systems for Shrinking Cities in South Korea, with Regards to Differences in Regional Characteristics
By Hyeyeong YOON, The Incheon Development Institute

Pause

▪ **Session TH10-02 – Fresh Insights on the Geography of Urban Growth and Decline in Mature Industrial Regions (II) 10:45-12:15 pm**

Moderated by Sophie BUHNIK, French Research Institute on Japan at the Maison franco-japonaise

10:45-11:15 am. Exurban Developments on the Fringes of the San Francisco Bay Area
By Mary SHI, UC Berkeley

11:20-11:50 am. Achieving the ‘Depopulation Dividend’: Japanese Developmental Leadership for the Asia-Pacific in the 21st Century
By Peter MATANLE, University of Sheffield

Discussion

▪ **Session TH10-03 – Urban Decline, Austerity and Housing Policies (I) 2:30-4:00 pm**
Moderated by Sophie BAUDET-MICHEL, Paris Diderot University

2:30-2:50 pm. Changes of Essential Facilities in Housing Estates in an Aging Society: The Failure of City Plan in Japan
By Yoshimichi YUI, Hiroshima University

2:55-3:25 pm. The Ambiguous Role of Social Housing Production in a French "Shrinking City"
By Matthieu GIMAT, Paris 1 University

3:30-4:00 pm. Investigating “Double Movements” on Urban Land Markets
By Marie PIGANIOL, Max Planck Institut

Pause

▪ **Session TH10-04 – Urban Decline, Austerity and Housing Policies (II) 4:15-5:45 pm**

Moderated by Sophie BAUDET-MICHEL, Paris Diderot University

4:20-4:50 pm. An Increase in Housing Vacancies in Japanese Cities: Demography, Urban Policies, and Administrative Solutions

By Tomoko KUBO, Gifu University

4:55-5:25 pm. Surplus to the City: Rethinking Displacement in Austerity London

By Kate HARDY, Leeds University (online session)

Discussion

June 24th (Sunday)

▪ **Session TH10-05 – Thinking Globally, Acting Locally. Multi-scalar approaches to the implementation of austerity policies (I) 9:00-10:30 am**

Moderated by Peter MATANLE, University of Sheffield

9:30-10:00 am. Austerity as Decline Policy in the American Rust Belt

By Jason HACKWORTH, University of Toronto

10:05-10:35 am. Reconfiguration of Hospital's Locations Since the Early 2000s in France: Are Shrinking Cities More at Stake?

By Sophie BAUDET-MICHEL, Paris Diderot University

Pause

▪ **Session TH10-06 – Thinking Globally, Acting Locally. Multi-scalar approaches to the implementation of austerity policies (II) 10:45-12:15 am**

Moderated by Peter MATANLE, University of Sheffield

10:50-11:20 am. Contemporary Discourses of Urban Entrepreneurialism and Economic Restructuring in Tokyo: A Case Study Approach

By Grace GONZALEZ, Kansai Gaidai University

11:25-11:55 am. Putting the revitalization of retail in mid-size cities on the national agenda: comparative perspectives

By Sophie BUHNIK, French Research Institute on Japan at the Maison franco-japonaise

Discussion

▪ **Session TH10-07 – Alternative Urban Responses to Austerity (I) 2:30-4:00 pm**

Moderated by Adrian FAVELL, University of Leeds

2:30-3:00 pm. Still Muddling, Not Yet through? in Search of Alternative Urban Politics for Shrinking Cities in Japan, Germany, and the USA

By René FLESHURZ and Karina PALLAGST, University of Kaiserslautern

3:05-3:35 pm. An Ordinary City: Reading Spatial Austerity in New Bedford (USA)
Planning and Policy Reports
By Justin HOLLANDER, Tufts University

Pause

▪ **Session TH10-08 – Alternative Urban Responses to Austerity (II) 4:15-5.45 pm**

Moderated by Adrian FAVELL, University of Leeds

4:15-4.45 pm. Social Participations Against Urban Politics ? A Study Case

By Anne-Sophie LE BÉLIARD, Pierre LE QUÉAU and Olivier ZERBIB, Grenoble Alpes University

4:50-5.20 pm. The Troika in Europe: Social, Spatial and Scalar Dynamics of State Shrinking after the Great Recession

Exchange with Judith CLIFTON, University of Cantabria (online exchange)

CONCLUSION