

Call for Papers

Urban Austerity: Impacts of the global financial crisis on cities in Europe

10th Hermann-Henselmann-Kolloquium

organized by the Institute for European Urban Studies Bauhaus-Universität Weimar and the Hermann Henselmann Foundation and sponsored by the Rosa-Luxemburg Foundation.

December 4th & 5th, 2014

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar, Germany

What started as a mortgage crisis in 2007 and became a global financial and economic crisis in 2008 has been transformed into a sovereign debt crisis since 2010. In all of these interwoven phases, cities have been, in multiple ways, at the heart of the turmoil. Against this background, we are delighted to announce our international conference "Impacts of the global financial crisis on cities in Europe". The conference seeks to promote an interdisciplinary debate that exposes actual urban problems in their spatiotemporal dimensions, discusses regulatory restructurings under a new regime of austerity urbanism, and reflects on the role of urban social movements struggling for progressive alternatives. In the first part of the conference we will bring in academics, practitioners, and political activists from Greece to share their research and experiences. In the second part, we will invite contributions from established academics, early career researchers, graduate students, critical governors, and political activists on a broad range of urban topics focused on but not limited to the regions most affected in Southern and Southeastern Europe. The issues to be discussed will include urban austerity (Panel 1), housing crisis (Panel 2), urban governance and planning (Panel 3), urban conflicts and contestations (Panel 4), uneven socio-spatial developments (Panel 5), and urban infrastructures and public services (Panel 6).

The enduring economic crisis itself and the "fiscal dictatorship" (Lehndorff 2012) imposed in the following years by German and European elites have affected urban regions dramatically as indebted home-owner have been evicted, masses of people impoverished, public budgets squeezed, municipal infrastructures privatized, public services downsized, and, above all, austerity measures implemented. Therefore, we strongly encourage contributions, both single and comparative case studies focusing on one of the following panels, that discuss the various and uneven impacts of the crisis on European urban cities and regions.

We invite all those focusing on urban research to apply for the conference and explicitly invite also researchers with a disciplinary background in urban planning, urban design or architecture to participate in the conference. The conference language is English.

Panel 1 "Urban austerity": We are especially interested in papers dealing with the impacts of the new regime of austerity established in the aftermath of the crisis. How are different urban regions affected by the slump and the following crisis management? Is austerity "a new operational matrix for urban politics" (Peck 2012)? How do urban governments drive, manage or subvert austerity?

Panel 2 “Housing crisis”: As all began with a deeply troubled subprime mortgage market in the US (Gotham 2009; Schwartz 2012) and housing price bubbles bursting also in a variety of European real estate markets (Martin 2011), we invite papers discussing the contemporary housing crisis. In the face of forced evictions and gentrification processes, we would like to discuss in what way the right to housing is nowadays again neglected and in what way we can speak of a return of the housing question (Schönig 2013)?

Panel 3 “Urban governance and planning”: Critical urban scholars have argued for a while that cities have long been a key institutional laboratory for regulatory restructuring and experimental policy-making, particularly during the last decades of actually existing neoliberalization (Peck/Tickel 2002). Nowadays confronted with a further wave of austerity urbanism, local politicians and urban managers look once again for new strategies to cope with the intensified contradiction between shrinking resources on the one side and the need to guarantee social cohesion and control on the other one. Hence, we warmly welcome proposals discussing for instance how urban governors respond to the crisis in diverse European regions? How do cities govern the economic crisis and what new regulatory restructurings are emerging?

Panel 4 “Urban conflicts and contestations”: However, cities are also mayor sites of social struggles and resistance (Harvey 2012; Uitermark et al. 2012). In recent years, they have increasingly become central places where social movements mobilize to contest the politics of austerity, the gentrification or degeneration of their neighborhoods, the private concentration of profits and assets, and the part and parcel of everyday capitalism. It still remains to be seen whether these social protests are actually able to challenge the existing power relations and whether they are able to push towards post-neoliberal regulatory experiments, be them progressive or reactionary (Brenner et al. 2010; Soureli/Youn 2009). Therefore, we would like to address questions like: What is the role of cities and urban societies in fostering resistance to the depredations of crisis? What is the potential for envisioning and enacting post-neoliberal urbanisms?

Panel 5 “Uneven socio-spatial developments”: Albeit striking is the uneven development of the crisis which leaves urban regions in Northern Europe relatively unaffected while regions in Southern Europe have particularly become the epicenter of mass impoverishment (Aalbers 2009; Hadjimichalis 2011). Thus, we cordially invite theoretical and empirical proposals that analyze and discuss the uneven development of the crisis.

Panel 6 “Urban infrastructure and public services”: Following up on this, we would like to discuss in this panel the specific effects the crisis has taken on the organization, distribution and quality of urban infrastructure and public services. Here we look for papers that discuss this in the context of general trends of privatization, fragmentation and cut downs of services that have been going on throughout the last decades.

We invite scholars interested in participating in this conference to send a paper abstract to **Sebastian Schipper (sebastian.schipper@uni-weimar.de)** and **Barbara Schönig (barbara.schoenig@uni-weimar.de)** no later than **July 31st, 2014**.

Proposals should be around 250 words and must include name(s), workplace, title of contribution, and preferred panel (1-6). We can offer limited travel subsidies to those lacking conference funding, especially from South and Southeastern Europe. Please state also whether you require financial assistance. The conference fee will be less than 50€. Decisions will be made until the end of August.

Please contact Sebastian Schipper (sebastian.schipper@uni-weimar.de) if you have any questions or comments about the conference.

Preliminary Program

Thursday, December 4th, 2014

14:00-14:30 Opening Plenary

14:30-18:00 Panel: Impacts of the global financial crisis on cities in Greece

Costis Hadjimichalis (Professor for Geography, Harokopio University Athens)

Maria Zifou (Dept. of Planning and Development, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

Dimitra Siatitsa (International Network for Urban Research and Action (INURA), Athens)

19:00-20:30 Keynote

Jamie Peck (Professor for Geography, University of British Columbia Vancouver)

Friday, December 5th, 2014

09:00- 09:15 Opening

09:15-16:45 Impacts of the global financial crisis on cities in Europe

09:15-11:15 Parallel session 1

Panel 1: Urban austerity

Panel 2: Housing crisis

11:30-13:30 Parallel session 2

Panel 3: Urban governance and planning

Panel 4: Urban conflicts and contestations

14:30-16:30 Parallel session 3

Panel 5: Uneven socio-spatial developments

Panel 6: Urban infrastructure and public services

16.45- 17:45 Keynote

Margit Mayer (Professor for Political Science, Freie Universität Berlin)

17:45-18:00 Closing Plenary

References

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