

International Symposium & Workshop

Hannover, February 22-24, 2023



War in Ukraine

**Prospects for the Interdisciplinary
Post-Soviet Urban Research**

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

ABOUT THE SYMPOSIUM

Since the last year, we have all been influenced by the significant social, political and economic consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine that equally affected interdisciplinary post-Soviet and post-socialist/Eastern European urban research. As an international academic community researching in this context, we have perceived these events as highly critical, which urged us to initiate a platform for identifying short- and medium-term research perspectives and exploring new possibilities for research dialogue with colleagues from the post-Soviet and post-socialist/Eastern European space. The symposium "War in Ukraine - prospects for the interdisciplinary post-Soviet urban research", supported by The Volkswagen Foundation, aims to offer a constructive and open atmosphere to reflect on and systematize the consequences of the current developments for interdisciplinary urban research related to Eastern Europe. In addition, this occasion is as an opportunity to identify socio-political and spatially relevant core topics for urban research and regional networking, and to provide solutions for methodological and organizational challenges of the "(Cold) War science".

For a good and trustful cooperation at the symposium, we want to be explicitly clear about our view on the war against Ukraine. We would like to build our symposium on the view on this war that was shared by more than 8,000 scientists from Russia in an open letter ("An open letter from Russian scientists and science journalists against the war with Ukraine" in [English](#) and [Russian](#)).

Purpose and aim of the symposium

The symposium reflects on the consequences of the Russian war of aggression for the interdisciplinary field of post-Soviet and post-socialist/Eastern European urban research: it creates a framework for gathering new orientational knowledge about current urban developments in Ukraine, Russia, and the neighbouring countries and for discussing them systematically and comparatively. It also provides a space to discuss the dramatic developments in the respective national scientific contexts for scholars and their institutions. Furthermore, the symposium creates a safe and open discussion atmosphere in order to re-establish the research dialogue between colleagues in the post-Soviet/post-socialist and other European/EU contexts, and to explore the possibilities for interdisciplinary, cooperative and comparative post-Soviet and post-socialist/Eastern European urban research.

The aim of the symposium is to identify possible projects for cooperative urban research that would address socio-politically as well as urban-spatially relevant topics of current urban development in the post-Soviet and post-socialist/Eastern European space, and to stimulate and explore the cooperation possibilities of international colleagues in a new way. These projects are an urgently needed tool to re-establish the shaken research dialogue in the region and with EU-Europe. They should make it possible to develop new basic and orientation knowledge for the reconstruction in the region after the end of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine and to (self-)critically develop the profile of post-Soviet and post-socialist/Eastern European urban research.

Guiding questions of the symposium

Core Topics: What are current, war-related developments and challenges in the region's cities in terms of urban spaces, urban societies, and governance issues? What are conceptual frames of reference to grasp the new developments? How far does the concept of post-Soviet/post-socialist urban development still carry as a unifying key concept; what are future-oriented perspectives?

Methodological-structural solutions: How can cooperative research be implemented under the restrictive circumstances and in view of the sometimes most difficult, individual situations of the researchers? How can the methods of the so-called remote social sciences be professionalized and the pitfalls of the (cold) war sciences be avoided, given the challenges of data validity, availability, data interpretation (external rather than self-perception)? How can the research community support colleagues in Ukraine and colleagues in and from Russia and Belarus?

Projects of cooperative urban research: What are existing, expandable, or newly developed projects that make core topics of research and professional dialogue workable? How can projects be designed in a low-threshold and cooperative way? What are currently feasible, cooperative formats of science communication, career security, support of young researchers and/or university teaching?

Envisioned outputs of the symposium

The symposium implements two central concerns: it develops current orientation knowledge, which is documented in **technical and content-related papers and in the form of a research memorandum**. The latter identifies core topics of the new post-Soviet urban research, the methodological, structural and individual challenges of comparative post-Soviet and post-socialist/Eastern European urban research. The symposium also serves to establish a network of researchers who will actively support the reflection on and coping with the multiple consequences of the war in the region and in the urban research community.



Organising committee

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