

# Eastern Sociological Society

## CALL FOR ABSTRACTS Small Cities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**A Mini-Conference at the Eastern Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Baltimore, MD, February 22 – 25, 2018**

Most research in urban sociology has focused on and been conducted in large cities, primarily those in the global north. Therefore, most of our concepts and theoretical models on cities and urban life are based on empirical phenomena found in these fairly extreme cases. In fact, while most people in the United States (and in the world) live in a city, more Americans live in cities of fewer than 250,000 people than those with larger populations. This oversight means we lack theoretical and empirical grounding to more fully understand distinctions between big and small cities as well as to fully conceptualize variation across smaller cities. Quite simply, we need more studies on small cities and to think more carefully about what we have already learned about them.

In many ways, people in small cities face many of the same issues as people in large ones (gentrification, inequality, crime, blight, growth imperatives, immigration) and they do so under the same conditions (an increasingly global economy that is shifting from making material goods to making ideas and providing services, expanding information and communication technologies, political divisiveness). In short, they are all dealing with life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But we cannot assume that small cities and their populations react to or experience these issues and conditions in the same manner as those in large ones.

This mini-conference seeks to bring together an array of research that is being conducted in or on small cities, loosely defined as incorporated municipalities with populations under 100,000. Our central aim is to expand and refine urban sociological theory and our understanding of city life by incorporating data from small city research into existing models and/or devising new conceptions of urbanity. Topics may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Growth strategies
- Rural/suburban/urban divides
- Relationships between large and small cities
- Positions within regions
- Variation across small cities
- Positions in the global economy
- Economic foundations
- Gentrification
- Inequality
- Immigration and diversity
- Definitions of what a “small city” is
- Non-Western cases
- Everyday urban life
- Lifestyles and consumption
- Tourism

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