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The story of shrinking city in Lithuania: drivers, consequences and governance

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After Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries joined EU, shrinkage issue assumed a new research approach, where majority of discussions concentrate on industrialization and population decline in the post-communist countries coping with the communism's consequences. Scholars have revealed that shrinking cities form a large share of Europe's large cities, however, they stress that it becomes obvious that current locality of emigration and drop of birth rates is situated in CEE. Lithuania is one of CEE countries that suffers great depopulation. Depopulation appears a great challenge for non-metropolitan cities and their residents, and also for decision makers. The purpose of my presentation is to introduce with urban shrinkage in Lithuania using an example of fourth biggest city in Lithuania – Šiauliai city. Presentation is based on the same logic (drivers, consequences and governance) that is presented in the 'heuristic model of urban shrinkage' introduced by a group of German, UK, Poland and other countries' scholars (Haase et al., 2014). The research allowed to point out that main drivers of shrinkage of Šiauliai fall into three main groups: political, economic and demographic; whereas consequences of shrinkage most heavily hits demographic situation of the city. National and Local governments are looking for ways how to deal with shrinkage, but so far not very successfully. Presentation has quantitative and qualitative sides: statistics numbers introducing with drivers and consequences of shrinkage, and most recent qualitative information collected via semi-structured interviews with local authorities of the city. Research grant DOTSUT-149 (09.3.3-LMT-K-712-02-0062) from Research Council of Lithuania

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