

Call for Papers:

***Governing the Dead in the Megacities of the Global South* (working title)**

Routledge, book series **Accommodating the Dead**

Editors: Dr Christien Klaufus and Dr Julie Rugg

The proposed edited collection draws together cutting-edge international theoretically and empirically-informed research on the ways in which cities and city authorities grapple with dead disposal spaces and death services. It focuses on so-called megacities (over 10 million inhabitants) and on high-density cities (over 1,000 inhabitants per square kilometer) experiencing an excessive pressure on dead disposal infrastructures in Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia.

Much scholarly debate has addressed the increasing urbanization levels worldwide. Theoretical debates and models have explored pathways towards sustainable urban futures, but predominantly with a focus on the living. How does the governance of the dead articulate with ideas and ideologies of sustainable, livable and just societies, especially in large, high-density and socio-culturally superdiverse megacities? How can cities already confronted with land scarcity, aging populations, or a rise in mortality rates from other causes (e.g. violence) solve the gridlock between the need for socio-environmentally sustainable deathspace development, contingent notions of dignity for the dead, and spatial scarcity resulting in high burial costs? Which knowledge is needed to improve dead disposal infrastructures and deathspace governance in non-western cities? Which approaches can innovate that field of knowledge? These questions are at the core of this volume.

The volume aims to contribute, first of all, to the field of death studies, offering illustrative case studies from a variety of cities across the globe, in which the treatment of dead bodies, access to cemeteries, or a decent burial need to be problematized. The volume equally contributes to the debate on sustainable urban futures by examining dilemmas and repercussions of dead disposal governance in selected Global South megacities, where urban planning and socio-spatial governance are a challenge by default. Analytically, this volume particularly invites contributions on the governance of dead disposal infrastructures that expressing one of the following liabilities: social and cultural (ethnic) inequality; environmental unsustainability; uncertain and fractured local governance structures; and tensions regarding the spatial distance of cemeteries and crematoriums.

In short, this publication aims to:

- 1] Theoretically articulate the fields of death studies with that of urban studies, especially in the context of pressing claims that both fields (urban studies as well as death theories) need to decenter epistemologies.
- 2] Theoretically unpack the specific challenges of large, socio-culturally extremely diverse metropolises in accommodating the dead in culturally appropriate ways.
- 3] Empirically juxtapose state-of-the-art knowledge on dead disposal regimes and governance from different megacities in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia, especially in light of increasing problems with overpopulated and/or underattended cemeteries, morgues, and crematoriums, to allow for comparisons and complementary policy ideas.

4] Methodologically innovate epistemologies with specific attention for new approaches coming from Global South-based scholars and also allowing for mixed methods approaches.

The chapters will have a 8,000 word limit. We will be expecting the submission of a 250-word abstract by the end of October 2026, and the completion of the chapter by the end of March 2027. The text will include academic contributions from across the globe but, unfortunately, all submissions will have to be in English.

Please do get in touch if you have any questions.

Kind regards,

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