RSA Research Network on Smart City-Regional Governance for Sustainability

CALL FOR PAPERS

Third Conference
**Smart City-Regional Governance for Sustainability
– Spatial Smartness –**

21-22 September 2017

University of Gdansk, Department of Economic Geography, Gdansk/Poland
in cooperation with the Metropolitan Institute, Gdansk

This call invites papers for the third conference of the Regional Studies Association (RSA) Research Network on **'Smart City-Regional Governance for Sustainability'**. The conference focuses in particular on 'spatial smartness' with the aim of exploring practical examples of how 'smartness' is approached by both policy makers and academia. This choice of focus addresses one of the primary aims of the RSA Network – to investigate meaning and practice of 'smartness' in city-regional governance. For this purpose, the notion of 'smartness' is understood here as revolving around finding a preferred balance between the competing quests for urban international competitiveness, national economic development, societal and territorial cohesion as well as environmental protection and addressing climate change.

The observed contest between often seemingly conflicting goals in governance arrangements become particularly evident when it comes to questions of 'sustainability' as the overarching political and policy-defining agenda. This contest is not made easier by the complexity of diverse emphases subsumed under the term 'sustainability': political-economic, societal or environmental concerns, with associated claims for economic growth, social equality, and ecological considerations. In city-regions, these contestations and thus necessities for reconciling policy goals are particularly complex – and, with their dense and intense interdependencies, pose formidable political and practical challenges. Yet, at the same time, this makes city-regions and their governance a fascinating and rewarding arena for investigating the many meanings of 'smartness' – and, indeed, sustainability.

The Gdansk conference sets out to explore '**spatial smartness'** as the central topic. 'Spatial smartness' refers to the innovative use of, or engagement with, territory in city-regional governance. This includes the projection of 'soft' or 'virtual' spaces as part of collaborative forms of governance, as in 'new regionalism', for instance. Such may be achieved through city networks based on personality or institution-based connections, trans-border engagement or international representation and lobbying. In such instances, functional and strategic (agenda) relationships and networks generate a projected spatial backcloth of a 'region'. The (conventional) alternative, of course, is redrawing administrative boundaries around areas of political-governmental control, with all the political and administrative upheaval and resistance that may entail. 'Smartness' may rest in the justification of such constructions, their operationalisation, and their strategic conceptualisation, seeking to reconcile multiple interests such as to minimize conflict and thus ineffective governance.

Based on this, academics and practitioners are **invited to submit** conceptual and empirical papers that address smartness in city-regional governance in its spatial implications. How important are administrative conventions, spaces of democratic legitimacy and identity, territory-based powers and responsibilities, etc.? Topics may include the spatial manifestation and implications of:

- Digital/informational smartness: the use of information and communication technologies to e.g. mobilise or involve local civil society, or even adopt and implement 'new' mechanisms of governance;

- Institutional smartness: the role of institutions in framing, facilitating and/or implementing 'smartness', such as through new ways of formulating policies, and responding to public political discourses, addressing conflicting policy agendas;

- Experimental smartness: collecting examples of cutting-edge practices to serve as an empirical basis for conceptual discussions about achieving multiple goals, changing established ways of doing things, reaching out to new actors and voices, etc. Specific, individual examples of experimental rationalising and policy-making in *smart* city-regional governance are of interest.

Submission of Abstracts

Abstracts should be around 300 words long and submitted by the deadline of **11 June 2017** via the conference website: *RSAN-SmartGov-Events.ioer.info*

Timeline

11 June	Deadline for sending in the abstract via the conference website.
23 June	By this date contributors will be informed whether their paper has been accepted. Start of registration. One week later a preliminary programme will be sent to the contributors.
20 August	Deadline for notified presenters to register. This also applies to those who would like to participate without presenting a paper. One week later the final programme will be made available.
21-22 September	Conference dates

Location and Organisation

The conference is hosted by the University of Gdansk, Department of Economic Geography, Gdansk/Poland. We are doing our best to avoid any registration fees. Only if absolutely necessary, a small contribution to catering costs could be required. Full registration via the conference website is required between 23 June and 20 August 2017 to secure a place and have the abstract included in the final conference programme. For further information and enquiries please visit *RSAN-SmartGov-Events.ioer.info* or contact the organisers on *RSAN-SmartGov-Events@mail.ioer.de.* Further information on the hosting institute can be found under: *http://en.kge.ug.edu.pl/.* For information on the Regional Studies Association go to: *www.regionalstudies.org.*

Travel and Accommodation Bursaries

Thanks to the support of the Regional Studies Association, we are able to offer two travel bursaries of up to €300 each to contribute towards travel and accommodation costs. Eligible to apply are: any student, early career or associate (retired) member of the RSA, as well as members working in a Band B, C or D country. If you are eligible and wish to apply, please add a paragraph to your abstract submission, in which you state your intent to apply, introduce yourself and briefly explain why you are eligible for such a bursary. Please note: The closing date for bursary applications is also **11 June 2017**. For further enquiries about the bursary, please contact the conference e-mail shown above. Thank you very much.

Core Group of the RSA Research Network

Organisers of event series: Dr *Gerd Lintz*, Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (network coordinator, Germany); Prof *Bas van Heur*, Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium); Dr *Igor Calzada*, University of Oxford (UK); Prof *Iwona Sagan*, University of Gdańsk, (Poland); Prof *Yonn Dierwechter*, University of Washington, Tacoma (USA); Dr *Tassilo Herrschel*, University of Westminster (UK). Further members: Dr *Stefano Di Vita*, Politecnico di Milano (Italy); Prof *Ethan Seltzer*, Portland State Univ., Portland (USA)