

Call for Papers

Conceptualising, Identifying and Analysing Polycentric Urban Regions

Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment
28-29 January, 2019

What could be a more inspiring location for the next event of the RSA Research Network on ‘Polycentric Urban Regions’ (PURs) than the Randstad, perhaps the most classic example of a Polycentric Urban Region and for decades a laboratory for analysis and policy-making on PURs?

We warmly invite scholars, early career researchers and PhD students to join us for a two-day workshop (January 28-29, 2019) on ‘Conceptualising, Identifying and Analysing Polycentric Urban Regions’ at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, Delft University of Technology, in the Netherlands.

Background

‘Polycentric urban regions’ (PURs) have become a key concept in urban and regional studies, both as an analytical framework to capture empirical realities as well as part of normative visions and goals in urban and regional development policies. In its most basic guise, the PUR notion – slightly different terms are used in the literature – applies to regions characterised by the presence of multiple, more-or-less proximate urban centres without pronounced hierarchical differentiation. The relevance of PUR research is premised on the observation that the concept captures an unfolding empirical reality. Indeed, PURs can be identified well beyond the intuitive examples such as the Randstad and the Rhein-Ruhr Area. In fact, PURs are increasingly becoming an empirical reality throughout Europe (Hoyler et al., 2008; Brezzi and Veneri, 2015), with 25% of the European population actually living in PURs (Meijers et al, 2018). Similar observations have been made for other world regions, including the U.S.A. where 22 out of 175 US metropolitan regions can be considered to be polycentric (Meijers and Lambregts, 2009). Research on urban and regional development in China has suggested that these can be fruitfully captured through the PUR notion as well. For example, large-scale regions such as the Yangtze and Pearl River Deltas are increasingly scrutinised through the PUR lens, as these megaregions are characterised by extensive series of more or less proximately located, significant cities (Li and Phelps, 2017; Zhao et al., 2017).

Topics

To understand this emerging reality better, to develop a coherent theoretical framework on PURs and to offer an opportunity for the exchange and sharing of new conceptual approaches, methods and best practices in analytical studies of PURs, we would very much welcome contributions focusing on:

- Conceptually defining PURs

- Driving forces behind PUR-formation
- Identification and delimitation of PURs around the world
- The spatial organisation of PURs: functional relationships, hierarchies and complementarities
- Network analysis to explore regional networks of cities
- Micro-level spatial behaviour of households and firms in PURs
- Linking polycentricity to economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability and social well-being
- ‘Borrowed size’ and ‘agglomeration shadows’ in PURs
- ‘Big data’ and new methods and analytical tools to understand PURs
- Case study research on PURs versus comparative research: specifics versus general mechanisms

Obviously, this is a non-exclusive list of topics and we would be happy to accommodate papers (or works in progress) on related issues as long as these have a strong conceptual or methodological focus on PURs. Note that there will be another event in the context of the research network that is specifically devoted to governing the complexity of PURs in the Fall of 2018. We would be happy to discuss opportunities for a joint publication based on this workshop.

Keynote speakers

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Stefan Siedentop, TU Dortmund & scientific director ILS – Institut für Landes- und Stadtentwicklungsforschung, Germany

Dr. Michiel van Meeteren, Loughborough University, UK

Prof. Dr. Frank van Oort, Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Dr. Xingjian Liu, The University of Hong Kong, China

Workshop format

In addition to the keynote speakers, all participants will present their work in plenary sessions and the workshop will be organized in such a way that there is ample time for discussion, feedback and creative thinking on future research steps.

Contact

For enquiries, please contact:

- Evert Meijers (Delft University of Technology) e.j.meijers@tudelft.nl
- Ben Derudder (Ghent University) ben.derudder@ugent.be

Deadlines

- 16 November 2018 – abstract submission deadline
- 20 November 2018 – notification of acceptance

Please send abstracts (or complete papers) to e.j.meijers@tudelft.nl and ben.derudder@ugent.be. Abstracts submitted will be reviewed by the organisers of the Regional Studies Network on Polycentric Urban Regions, as there is a maximum number of participants we can accommodate.

Travel bursary available for PhD student

We have a small budget to financially support travel and accommodation for PhD students that are willing to join the workshop and that do not have (sufficient) resources themselves in their project budget. If this is the case, please indicate in your submission email that you would like to be considered for this travel bursary.

Registration fee

Thanks to generous support by the Regional Studies Association, Delft University of Technology and Ghent University, workshop participation is free of charge and meals are included (including a conference dinner).

Travel and accomodation

We will provide an overview of travel options and accommodation options to the participants in a later stage.

RSA Research Network on Polycentric Urban Regions

The RSA Research Network on Polycentric Urban Regions was launched at the Regional Studies Association Annual conference in Lugano, Switzerland in June 2018. The aim of the network is (1) to set a renewed agenda for PUR research within urban and regional studies, (2) to inform cutting-edge theoretical, methodological, and policy insights, (3) to cultivate synergies between researchers with different backgrounds and at different stages of their career, as well as (4) to contribute to policy debates through impactful research and engagement. The initiators of the network are Ben Derudder, John Harrison, Michael Hoyler, Xingjian Liu and Evert Meijers. The network is open to all scholars with an interest in PURs!