

Regional Studies Association Winter Conference 2019 (#RSAWinter)

Turbulent Times: Rethinking Regions and Cities

14th – 15th November 2019, Holiday Inn Bloomsbury, London, UK

Abstract submission deadline: 1st July 2019

CALL FOR SPECIAL SESSION PROPOSALS

As part of the Regional Studies Association Winter Conference 2019, we welcome proposals for Special Sessions. Special Sessions are a great way to bring together presenters to discuss and highlight a particular topic and to develop or further extend your network.

We offer two types of Special Sessions:

1. Open Special Session – the session organiser proposes the topic and provides a short description/call for submissions (please use headers below). Delegates can submit their abstract for this session when they register for the conference.
2. Closed Session – the session organiser proposes the complete session including all speakers. Other delegates may not submit their abstracts for this session. Please note that all speakers need to register to be able to present.

Both sessions are open to all delegates to attend as audience.

Once your Special Session proposal has been accepted, we will add it to the conference's page and promote it. As the session's organiser, we would be grateful if you could also spread the word to interested researchers via your networks.

After the general abstract submission deadline has closed (**1st July 2019**), you will receive all abstracts submitted to your session for your review.

After reviewing the abstracts, the next step will be to send the accepted abstracts in the order you wish to have them in your Special Session to the RSA. The actual scheduling of the programme will then be done by the RSA.

Contact

If you would like to organise a Special Session, please complete the headings below and send to Katharina Bürger at katharina.buerger@regionalstudies.org.

Session Title: Global regionalism: a wider picture of China's Belt and Road Initiative

Session Organiser: Dr Julie T. Miao; Prof Xiangming Chen; Dr Xue Li

Open/Closed Session: Open

Description (with speakers listed if a closed session):

Through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China is potentially capable of reshaping globalization and a new era of South-South cooperation through massive funding and construction to weave trade and infrastructure connections among almost 70 countries. While recognizing BRI's varied opportunities and potential roles in reshaping the global regionalism, we also need to be aware of its economic, social and geopolitical risks relative to opportunities

embedded in the multi-scalar power and resource spaces for diverse actors across global, national and local levels and boundaries.

The fundamental policy challenge to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) revolves around its grand vision, sweeping scope and diverse partnerships. BRI reflects President Xi Jinping's ambitious vision for China to help the world achieve "shared growth through collaboration in the common human community." This official rhetoric aside, BRI amounts to a China-led globalization and a new model and round of South-South cooperation in which China plays a leading role (see Liu and Dunford 2016). BRI covers around 70 countries, almost all of which belong to the Global South, including the so-called transition countries in East-Central Europe, while Deng et al (2018) include as many as 93 countries in BRI. BRI countries account for about half of the world's population and 40% of its GDP. In its vast geographical coverage, BRI encompasses six corridor-shaped, boundary-spanning regions and 274 cities with one million or more population, 105 of which are located inside China (Li and Tu 2018). The diversity of countries and cities challenges policymakers and other stakeholders such as funders and builders in understanding the complex economic, political and spatial distribution of risks in order to realize opportunities with benefits for all parties and citizens. The balance between BRI's positive vision and great promise vs. its territory-specific risks and blind spots is the crux of the policy problem addressed in this special session.

The aim of this special session, therefore, is to bring together scholars interested in the various aspects of China's Belt and Road Initiative in an effort to investigate and project a bigger picture of its regional influence. We could encourage multifaceted angles covering prospects from global, national, regional, and city-level analysis. These could include: macro and micro economic analysis of the factors that render some regions/cities more prepared to take part in BRI; detailed and/or comparative case studies to illustrate how opportunities and risks interact to produce varied outcomes of cross-border regional cooperation; geopolitical investigation of how BRI is challenging and reshaping the global order and power structure; operational practice and challenges in places and the counter-measures taken up by different cities and regions; and implications and lessons rendered for policy makers across BRI's sectors and spaces

Within the broad theme of understanding the Belt and Road Initiative, we welcome both theoretical and empirical contributions along but not limited to the following topics. The outcome of this special session will be an edited book and potentially a special journal issue.

- The perceivable challenges to BRI from many participating players across the global, national, regional and local levels and boundaries;
- Theoretical and methodology issues in defining and differentiating BRI's opportunities vs. risks;
- Geopolitical analysis of BRI's impact on the global order and its sustainability;
- Opportunities and risks presented in different places, and their interactions to produce varied outcomes of cross-border regional cooperation;
- Social, environmental, and other operational practice carried out in different regions and projects and potential challenges facing shareholders;
- Policy implications towards effective bilateral and multilateral policies for achieving the BRI's desired outcome of inclusive and sustainable development

Deadlines and information:

- Abstract submission deadline: 19th August, 2019
- On-line registration open: 3rd September 2019
- Please submit contributions to: <https://www.regionalstudies.org/events/2019-winter-conference/>
- For more information about this special session, please enquiry: Dr Julie Miao at Julie.miao@unimelb.edu.
- For more information about the conference and on-line registration, visit: <https://www.regionalstudies.org/events/2019-winter-conference/>

Organizers:

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