

RSA Regional Studies Association

Regions in Recovery

Building Sustainable Futures – Global E-Festival

2nd – 18th June 2021

Abstract submission deadline: 17th March 2021

This conference is a new venture in response to a Covid-19 world. It recognises current difficulties for researchers wishing to share their research and thinking. This initiative brings together both formal and informal researcher led groupings in regional studies and science to create an open and inclusive environment with minimum barriers to engagement. There are several routes to participation – you may offer a paper, organise a workshop session/s, offer to chair or simply turn on and tune in.

Recent months have seen the exceptional become the ordinary. From social distancing to widespread travel restrictions, new quarantine rules to lockdowns and remote working, the significant shock of Covid-19 and its implications are becoming clearer for all to see. And yet, as attention switches to recovery, calls to pivot away from business-as-usual approaches are clashing with structural forces opposed to significant change. Add in the global climate and migration crises, rise in populism, racial tensions and the #blacklivesmatter movement, geopolitical manoeuvrings by the United States, Russia, China, EU, and the question on most people's lips is: what happens next?

Against this backdrop, regional studies are more vital than ever to inform public debate and invoke appropriate policy responses. Indeed, regional studies has tools tailored to understanding the spatial impacts of significant shocks, be they economic, political, social or environmental. For this reason, regional research is once more spearheading major efforts to provide the type of reliable, robust knowledge necessary to support cities and regions in their recovery. 2020 has taught us that the greater the change the greater the disruption, but also the greater the disruption the greater the chance of change. As we look ahead though, it is critical that we consider fundamental questions about the significance of these changes. What changes will ultimately endure? Which changes will be short-lived and quickly fizzle away? Why is this and what are the implications for cities and regions? What does it tell us about the capacity for regional research to influence policy and affect meaningful change? The **Regions in Recovery** conference presents a timely opportunity to discuss and debate these important issues, to establish the need and nature of future research imperatives in the field, and to address the concerns and challenges confronting practitioners and policymakers. The focus on rapid change is an invitation to step outside the narrow confines of existing debate to address issues of profound relevance, significance and importance to the future of regions and cities.

The RSA are keen to attract papers and sessions which rethink cities and regions by identifying new fields of enquiry, address a broad research and policy agenda, and include contributions from any discipline which can offer relevant insights at local and regional levels. Papers which are highly innovative, collaborative, international or multi-disciplinary are especially welcome.

Broad themes and key agendas the organisers are keen to facilitate discussion around include, but are not limited to:

- Social, spatial and economic impacts of the pandemic
- Changes to the form and function of cities and regions in a post-COVID world
- How we address racial and ethnic divides in cities and regions
- Lessons from lockdown as a forced experiment in doing things differently
- Alternatives to the winner-takes-all mantra of economic development and their (dur)ability to disrupt current growth models
- Fiscal frameworks and spending priorities for ensuring a balanced recovery
- Approaches and methods for conducting urban and regional research in an era of social distancing and travel restriction
- Industry 4.0 and the future shape of innovation, industrial development and strategy
- The changing geographies and spatial impacts of global investment flows and value chains
- Regional implications arising from recent geopolitical manoeuvrings by the United States, Russia, China, and EU on trade, climate and foreign affairs
- Energy transitions, environmental sustainability, and designing future cities and regions
- The role of planning, governance, and devolution in a rapidly changing world

The festival will be wholly virtual and powered by the Regional Studies Association through its new app – RSA Hub, available to download free from all major app stores. The conference platform will be zoom. The RSA provides the conference secretariat and will work in collaboration with all the partners to bring this event to the community.

If you would like more information about how to join with one or more sessions, please contact the conference secretariat Lesa Reynolds: lesa.reynolds@regionalstudies.org. Or call +44(0)1273 099622

Notes:

Abstracts submitted to the conference will go through a refereeing process depending upon the stream in which it is submitted. Refereeing practices may therefore vary across the conference.

Abstract Submission Guidelines:

- Between 250-500 words in length
- Titled
- Indicate which gateway theme the paper is being submitted under
- Text only; no diagrams, graphs, pictures, citations or maps
- All contributing authors must be named, with their country and Institution

There will be an upper limit to the number of papers that can be accepted so early submission is advised. Payment is required on submission but if the paper cannot be accepted a refund of the fee (excluding charges) will be made.

You may also submit a special session for the festival and more details can be found [here](#).