

Call for Papers

Understanding City Dynamics

24.9. - 26.9. 2010, Darmstadt (Germany)

International Conference of the European Urban Research Association

The European Urban Research Association (EURA) in co-operation with the Urban Research Centre ('Eigenlogik der Städte') at Darmstadt University of Technology will hold its next conference on 'Understanding City Dynamics' in Darmstadt (Germany). We extend an invitation to colleagues from Europe, North America and from across the world to join us in a conference examining city dynamics.

General Questions

**Do cities have choices – in a globalised world? Or: Do local politics matter?
And: How to explain differences between cities?**

These questions are inspired by the observation that despite all tendencies of homogenisation and (economic as well as political) constraints related to globalisation and Europeanization, political strategies of cities differ. It can be (and it is) argued that local problem perceptions as well as objectives and aims of actions differ because they result from an understanding of what is seen as appropriate (and what is not), which is locally embedded in and reproduced by particular actor relations. The fact that different strategies of cities (for instance in respect to economic competitiveness) are actually successful, can be related to what has been called 'glocalisation' – namely an increasing relevance of a particular local setting through globalisation. Globalisation can go hand in hand with an increased relevance of the 'local' because only a concrete spatial context offers the preconditions (for instance certain knowledge-based service provisions) of an allocation of what is potentially possible (globally) everywhere. These preconditions can be created or even influenced by actors, and specific local political strategies are crucial for creating or even influencing such preconditions.

Do we need a (new) theory of urbanism/urbanity to understand how modern societies are functioning?

This question is stimulated by writings of urban scholars – like Louis Wirth – who looked for 'particular characteristics of the city as a particular form of human association', for 'distinguishing characteristics of urban life' or 'the urban mode of living'. Emphasising 'urbanism as a characteristic mode of life' is not only essential because nowadays most people are living in urban spaces. Since the late 1970's, a powerful tradition has taken root, which regards cities as laboratories for investigating societal practices. Our endeavour on this conference is to discuss how people

develop a non-questioned certainty about a city, which finds expression in many different forms and can therefore be reconstructed in various fields (for example in the speech of visitors and residents, in pictorial depictions of the city, in written sources dealing with it, in buildings and urban planning, in events such as city festivals and parades, in objects of the material culture of the city). The underlying assumption is that the intrinsic logic (Eigenlogik) of a city weaves itself into the constitutive objects of life practice, into the human body (habitus), into the materiality of dwellings, streets, centre formations, into cultural practice, the way of speech, the emotional engagement of a city, political practice, economic potency, market strategies, and so on and so forth. The theoretical question to discuss is if and how a city possesses certain essential characteristics that pervade many areas of life.

Conference Themes

This conference calls for papers relating to one of the following themes (organized in one track each). We welcome scholars from diverse disciplines as well as practitioners.

- **The intrinsic logic of the city**
- **Metropolitan governance and the dynamics of city regions**
- **City choices and strategic planning**
- **Sustainability: Local meanings and strategies**
- **How to achieve economic competitiveness and social cohesion?**
- **Urban design and built environment**

For Further information for the conference themes and the tracks please visit the Conference Homepage www.politikwissenschaft.tu-darmstadt.de/citydynamics

Outline Programme

The conference will start at 10:30 AM on Friday, 24th September, and finish at lunch time on Sunday, 26th September. *(In addition, 'mobile workshops' will be organized on Sunday afternoon.)*

Proposal Submission

The abstract submission opens 1st January 2010 and ends 31st March 2010. Accepted papers have to be submitted until 30th August 2010.

Homepage & Contact

From September 2009 the Darmstadt University of Technology operates a homepage that will be continuously updated. This official website of the Conference is **www.politikwissenschaft.tu-darmstadt.de/citydynamics**

The following e-mail account is open for information and arrangements about the Conference: **citydynamics@pq.tu-darmstadt.de**

Organizers

The Conference is organized by the Urban Research Centre (*LOEWE-Schwerpunkt 'Eigenlogik der Städte'*) at Darmstadt University of Technology with support of members of the European Urban Research Association (EURA).

